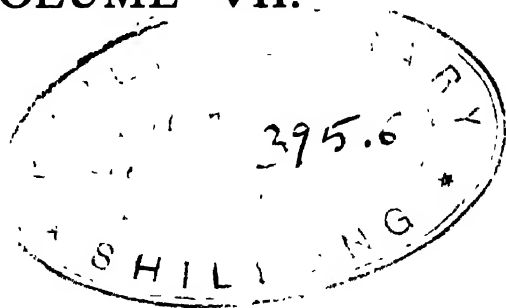




NELSON'S  
HISTORY OF THE WAR  
VOLUME VII.





NELSON'S HISTORY  
OF THE WAR. By  
John Buchan.

Volume VII. From the Second Battle of Ypres to  
the Beginning of the Italian Campaign.

THOMAS NELSON AND SONS  
LONDON, EDINBURGH, DUBLIN, AND NEW YORK





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# NELSON'S HISTORY OF THE WAR.

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## CHAPTER L.

### THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES.

Position at the Beginning of April—Difficulties of the Ypres Salient—British Dispositions—The Capture of Hill 60—Shelling of Ypres begun—The First Gas Attack—Retreat of the French—Behaviour of Canadian 3rd Brigade—The Filling of the Gap—The Second Gas Attack—Stand of Canadian 2nd Brigade—Loss of St. Julien—Failure of Attempt to retake it—The Canadians relieved—Nature of their Achievement—The Fight of the Northumbrian Division—The Struggle for Grafenstafel Ridge—The Third Gas Attack—British Line shortened—Work of R.A.M.C.—Loss of Frenzenberg Ridge—The Cavalry replaces the 28th Division—Cavalry Battle of May 13th—Charge of the 8th Cavalry Brigade—Stand of London Rifle Brigade—The Fourth Gas Attack, May 24th—Death of Captain Francis Grenfell—Deductions from the Second Battle of Ypres—Performance of Territorial Troops—Spirit of the Army—Description of Ypres after the Bombardment—The Fate of the City and the Salient.

**I**N April the spirits of the Allies were high. Russia was believed to be making way in the Carpathians in the direction of the plains of Hungary. France was preparing for a great effort against the most vital portion of the German front, and in Britain it was thought that presently we should repeat on an extended scale the tactics of

Neuve Chapelle, and do more than dint the opposing line. Such a season of optimism is often a precursor of misfortunes and black depression, and within a month's time a series of desperate actions on both East and West had convinced us that Germany did not intend yet awhile to forgo her favourite part of the offensive. So far as the British front was concerned, the assault came where we were least ready. Our heavy guns had been largely taken from the northern section to assist the artillery preparation farther south. The French regulars had gone from the Ypres Canal to join in the great movement in the Artois, and the Salient, that old cockpit of war, was held in very moderate strength. Suddenly, and almost without warning, it became the theatre of an attack which put our fortitude to a fiery trial.

The First Battle of Ypres—still the greatest and most critical struggle of the Western war—began on 20th October, and ended with the repulse of the Prussian Guard on 11th November. The battle-front stretched from Bixschoote in the north to Armentières in the south, over a broad salient whose first apex was Becelaere, and second Gheluvelt. In it we opposed numbers which were never more than 150,000 to an enemy whose strength was at least half a million. During the worst part of the fighting we had three infantry divisions and some cavalry to meet five army corps, three of the first line. We had to face not only a perpetual bombardment by superior artillery, but a succession of attacks by massed infantry delivered with desperate resolution. The German aim was the road to Calais ; their assault was a deliberate and sustained offensive comparable

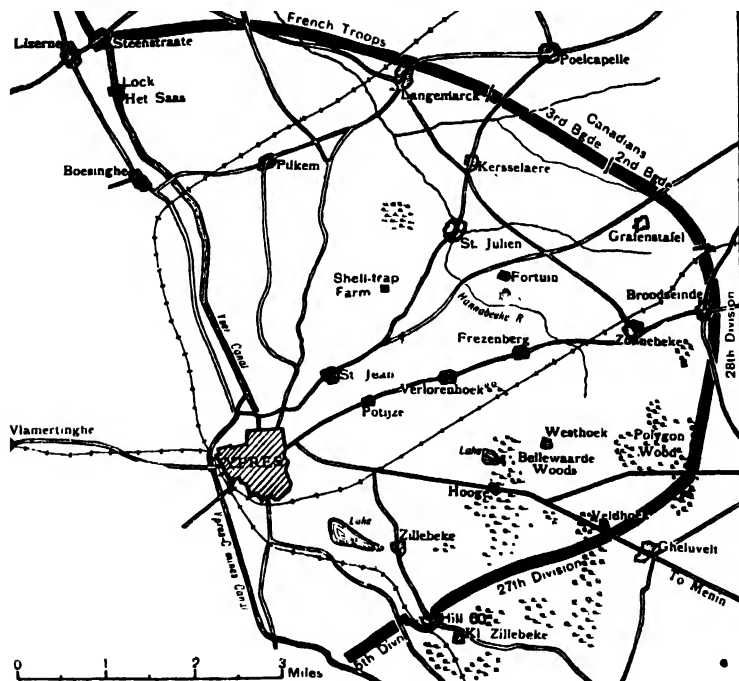
## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 11

to their first sweep from the Sambre and the Meuse, or von Hindenburg's November thrust against Warsaw. Its failure marked the end of the second phase of the war in the West.

The Second Battle of Ypres belongs to a different category. It was confined to the northern segment of the Salient, between the Ypres Canal and the Menin road. Probably the Germans had no elaborate offensive purpose at the start. The battle began with a local counter-attack in return for our efforts at Hill 60, and when this attack prospered it was pushed beyond its original aim. A proof is that there was no great massing of troops, as in the autumn battle. Local reserves were brought up, but the German line was not thinned elsewhere. But in two respects the battles are akin. The second lasted almost exactly as long as the first—from Thursday, 22nd April, to Thursday, 13th May, when it slackened owing to the British thrust from Festubert. Like the first, too, it was fought against heavy odds. A crushing artillery preponderance and the use of poison gas were more deadly assets than any weight of numbers. For days our fate hung in the balance, dispositions grew chaotic in the fog of war, and it became a soldiers' battle, like Malplaquet and Albuera, where rules and textbooks were forgotten, and we won by the sheer fighting quality of our men.

A glance at the map will show the peculiar difficulties of the Ypres Salient. Its nominal base was the line St. Eloi-Ypres-Bixschoote, but its real base was the town of Ypres itself. Ypres was like the hub of a wheel from which all the communica-

tions eastwards radiated like spokes. One important road crossed the canal at Steenstraate, and a few pontoon bridges had been built nearer Ypres; but all the main routes ran through Ypres—to Pilkem, to Langemarck, to Poelcapelle, to Zonnebeke, to Ghe-



Second Battle of Ypres. Sketch showing position at the Ypres salient on the morning of April 22nd.

luvelt and Menin, besides the railway to Roulers. Virtually all the supplies and reserves for the troops holding the Salient must go through the neck of the bottle at Ypres. Now, early in November the Germans won gun positions at the southern re-



## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 13

entrant which enabled them to shell the town, and a bombardment was continued intermittently throughout the winter. A serious cannonade would gravely interfere with our communications, and we held the Salient with this menace perpetually before us. We could assume that a heavy shelling of Ypres would be a preliminary to any German attack.

From the middle of November to the end of January the Salient was held by the French—Du-bois's famous 9th Corps, and Territorials. On the 1st of February part of the French were withdrawn, and General Bulfin's 28th Division was brought north to replace them. By the 20th of April the Allied front was as follows: *April 20.*

From the canal through Bixschoote to just east of Langemarck, and covering the latter place, was a French division—the 45th—of Colonial infantry. On the right of the French, to a point north-east of Zonnebeke, lay the Canadian Division, under General Alderson, General Turner's 3rd Brigade on the left, and General Currie's 2nd Brigade on the right.\* From north-east of Zonnebeke to the

\* The Canadian Division was composed as follows:—

*1st Brigade* (Brigadier-General Mercer)—1st Battalion (Ontario Regiment), 2nd Battalion (Eastern Ontario), 3rd Battalion (Toronto Regiment), 4th Battalion (Central Ontario).

\* *2nd Brigade* (Brigadier-General A. W. Currie)—5th Battalion, 6th Battalion (Fort Garry's), 7th Battalion (British Columbia Regiment), 8th Battalion (90th Winnipeg Rifles).

*3rd Brigade* (Brigadier-General Turner, V.C.)—13th Battalion (Royal Highlanders of Canada), 14th Battalion (Royal Montreal Regiment), 15th Battalion (48th Highlanders of Canada), 16th Battalion (Canadian Scottish).

*4th Brigade* (Brigadier-General Cohoe)—9th Battalion,

south-east corner of the Polygon Wood was the 28th Division, the 85th, 84th, and 83rd Brigades in order from left to right. At the corner of the Polygon Wood was Princess Patricia's Regiment of the 27th Division; and this division, under General Snow, continued the front east of Veldhoek along the ridge almost to Hill 60, where General Morland's 5th Division took over the line. The trenches we had received from the French were not good, especially in the section held by the Canadians and the 85th Brigade. They were very wet, and the dead were buried in the bottoms and the sides, so that to improve them was a gruesome and unwholesome task. Had it been possible, it would have been better to construct a wholly new line. Farther south the situation was better, and the 83rd Brigade and the 27th Division were comfortably entrenched. Against this section was arrayed the left wing of the army of Wurtemberg, whose headquarters were at Thielt. Opposite the British were the 26th and 27th Corps, reserve formations composed of mixed Saxons and Wurtembergers, and the right of the 15th Corps from Alsace, the heroes of Zabern. Other detachments appeared during the battle, including a battalion of Marines.

To understand the significance of the events which began on 22nd April it is necessary to go back to what happened on the 17th. The operations at Hill 60 were not strictly a part of the Ypres battle, but they were a link in the chain of causes.

10th Battalion (Western Canada Regiment), 11th Battalion, 12th Battalion.

There was also an unbrigaded 17th Battalion—the Nova Scotia Highlanders.

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 15

Hill 60 is only a hill to the eye of faith, being no more than an earth heap from the cutting of the Ypres-Lille railway. Its advantage is that it gives a gun position from which the whole German front in the neighbourhood of Hollebeke Château can be commanded. It is just east of the hamlet of Zwartelen, where the Household Brigade made their decisive charge on the night of 6th November. About seven in the evening of 17th April we exploded seven mines on the hill, *April 17.* which played havoc with the defence, blowing up a trench line and 150 men. The 1st Royal West Kent and the 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers won the top, entrenched themselves in the shell craters, and brought up machine guns. Next day, Sunday, at 6.30, the Germans made a *April 18.* counter-attack in mass formation, which resulted in a desperate struggle at close quarters. Our machine guns mowed down the enemy, but he reached our trenches, and there was some fierce hand-to-hand fighting. Repeatedly during the day the attacks were renewed, but all were driven back, and by the evening we had expelled the enemy from the slopes of the hill with the bayonet. The 2nd West Riding and the 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry now relieved the original battalions. In this struggle we lost heavily, but the Germans lost more, and all the *glacis* was littered with their dead.

For the next three days there was no respite. The position was vital to the enemy if he would keep his Hollebeke ground, and the 19th Saxons were hurled against it, with the support of artillery and asphyxiating bombs. The hill formed a salient, and we were exposed to fire from three sides. On

the 19th and 20th the terrific cannonade continued. On the evening of the latter day, about

*April 20.* 6.30, there was another infantry attack which lasted for an hour and a half, while all the night parties with hand grenades worked their way up to our trenches. Lieutenant George Roupell of the 1st East Surreys won the Victoria Cross for the courage and tenacity with which, though several times wounded, he held his position with the remnants of his company till relief came. Second Lieutenant Geoffrey Woolley of the 9th London Regiment (Territorial) earned the same distinction that night, during which at one time he was the only officer on the hill. On Wednesday

*April 21.* morning, the 21st, the enemy had established himself at one point on the slopes, at the north-east edge, but in the afternoon we dislodged him. All that evening howitzer shell rained on us, and asphyxiating bombs choked and blinded our men, while the German field guns were in close range. Against an area 250 yards long by 200 deep tons of metal were flung, and for four and a half days the defenders lived through a veritable hell. But on Thursday, the 22nd, the hill was still ours, and there came a sudden lull in the attack—another such dangerous lull as that which on 28th October had preceded the launching of the thunderbolt.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, the 20th, the bombardment of Ypres had begun. Suddenly into the

*April 20.* streets of the little city, filled with their normal denizens and our own reserves, there fell the great 42-cm. shells. Fifteen children were killed at play, and a number of civilians perished in the debris. It was the warning for which

we were prepared, and the high command grew anxious. The destruction of Ypres served no military object in itself. It could only be a means to the blocking of the routes through which we supplied our lines on the Salient. It could not be aimed at Hill 60, where our communications had a free road to the west. It must herald an attack on the section between the canal and the Menin road.

The evening of Thursday, the 22nd, was calm and pleasant, with a light, steady wind blowing from the north-east. About 6.30 our *April 22.* artillery observers reported that a strange green vapour was moving over the French trenches. Then, as the April night closed in, and the great shells still rained upon Ypres, there were strange scenes between the canal and the Pilkem road. Back through the dusk came a stream of French soldiers, blinded and coughing and wild with terror. Some black devilry had come upon them, and they had broken before this more than human fear. Behind them they had left hundreds of their comrades stricken and dead, with froth on their lips and horrible blue faces. The rout surged over the canal, and the road to Vlamertinghe was choked with broken infantry and galloping gun teams lacking their guns. No discredit attaches to those who broke. The pressure was more than flesh and blood could bear. Some of the Zouaves and Turcos fled due south towards the Langemarck road, and in the early darkness came upon the Canadian reserve battalions. With amazement the Canadians saw the wild dark faces, the heaving chests, and the lips speechless with agony. Then they too sniffed something on the breeze, something which caught

at their throats and affected them with a deadly nausea.

The instant result was a four-mile breach in the Allied line. What was left of the French were back on the canal from Boesinghe to Steenstraate, where they were being pushed across by the German attack, and between them and the left of the Canadian 3rd Brigade were four miles of undefended country. Through this gap the Germans were pouring, preceded by the fumes of the gas, and supported by a heavy artillery fire.

The Canadians had suffered from the gas, but to a less extent than the French. With his flank in the air there was no course before General Turner except to refuse his left. Attempts were made to rally the fleeing Turcos, and Captain Guy Drummond of the Royal Highlanders, a gallant and popular officer, fell heroically in this task. Under the pressure of an attack by four divisions the 3rd Brigade bent inwards from a point just south of Poelcapelle till its left rested on the wood east of St. Julien, between the Langemarck and Poelcapelle roads. Beyond it there was still a gap, and the Germans were working round its flank. The whole 1st Canadian Brigade was in reserve, and it was impossible to use it at a moment's notice. Two battalions, the 10th and 16th, were in the brigade reserve of the 2nd and 3rd, and these were brought forward by midnight and flung into the breach.

A battery of 4.7 guns, lent by the 2nd London Division to support the French, was in the wood east of St. Julien. The gun teams were miles away. That wood has no name, but it deserves to be christened by the name of the troops who died in

it. For through it the 10th Battalion under Colonel Boyle, and the 16th under Colonel Leckie, charged at midnight, and won the northern fringe. They re-captured the guns, but could not bring them away; but they destroyed parts of them before they fell again into German hands, when the line was forced back by artillery fire. Another counter-attack was attempted to ease the strain. Two battalions of General Mercer's 1st Brigade—the 1st and 4th Ontario—charged the German position in the gap. Colonel Birchall of the 4th was killed while leading his men, and his death fired the battalion to a splendid effort. They carried the first German shelter trenches, and held them till relief came two days later.

A wilder battle has rarely been witnessed than the struggle of that April night. The British reserves at Ypres, shelled out of the town, marched to the sound of the firing, with the strange, sickly odour of the gas blowing down upon them. The roads were congested with the nightly supply trains for our troops in the Salient. All along our front the cannonade was severe, while the Canadian left, bent back almost at right angles, was struggling to entrench itself under cover of counter-attacks. In some cases they found French reserve trenches to occupy, but more often they had to dig themselves in where they were allowed. The right of the German assault was beyond the canal in several places, and bearing hard on the French remnants on the eastern bank. All was confusion, for no Staff work was possible. To their eternal honour the 3rd Canadian Brigade did not break. Overwhelmed with superior numbers of men and guns, and sick to death

with the poisoned fumes, they did all that men could do to stem the tide. The 15th Battalion (48th Highlanders), who bore the brunt of the gas, recovered themselves after the first retreat, and regained their position. The 13th Battalion (Royal Highlanders) did not give ground at all. Major Norsworthy, though badly wounded, rallied his men till he got his death wound. Captain M'Cuaig, who had received a crippling wound, insisted that he should be left behind, so as not to encumber his men. And all the while there was the yawning rent on our left which gave the enemy a clear way to Ypres. Strangely enough, they did not push their advantage. As in the First Battle of Ypres, they broke our line, but could do nothing in the breach.

Very early in the small hours of Friday morning the first British reinforcements arrived in the gap.

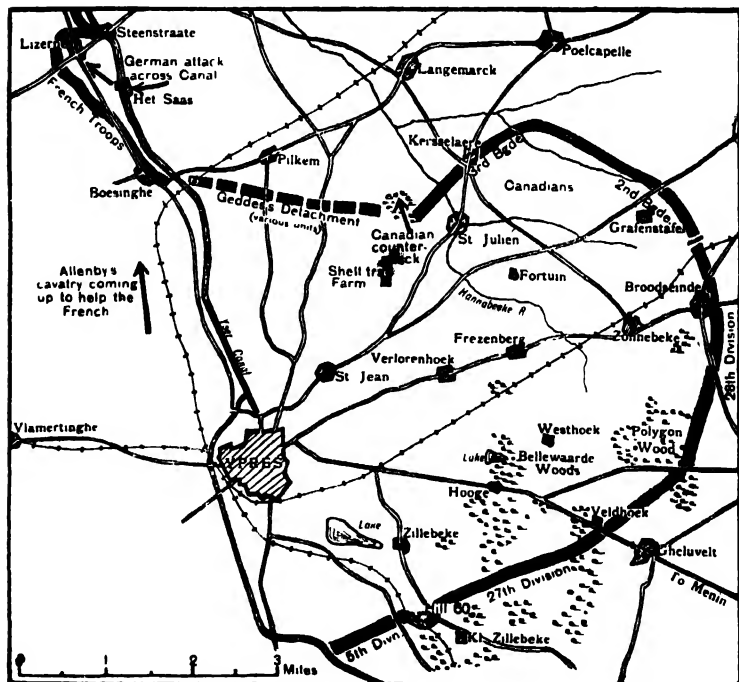
*April 23.* They came mostly from the 28th Division,\* which, as we have seen, was holding the line from east of Zonnebeke to the south-east corner of the Polygon Wood. The line was held by three companies of each battalion, with one in support, and the supporting companies were sent to reinforce the Canadians. This accounts for the strange mixture of units in the subsequent fighting. In addition they had in reserve the 2nd Buffs, the 8th Middlesex (Territorials), the 1st York and Lan-

\* Its front was formed from left to right by the 3rd Royal Fusiliers, the 2nd East Surrey, and the 3rd Middlesex of the 85th Brigade; the 2nd Northumberland Fusiliers, the 1st Suffolks, the 2nd Cheshires, and the 1st Welsh of the 84th Brigade; and the 2nd King's Own Royal Lancashires, the Monmouths (Territorial), and the 1st Yorkshire Light Infantry of the 83rd Brigade.



## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 21

caster, the 5th King's Own (Territorials), and the 2nd East Yorks. These five battalions, under the command of Colonel Geddes of the Buffs, took up position in the gap, and acted along with the 10th and 16th Canadians, who had conducted the first



Second Battle of Ypres. Position on the morning of Friday, April 23rd.

counter-attack. This force varied from day to day—almost from hour to hour—in composition, and for convenience we may refer to it as Geddes's Detachment. It picked up, as the fighting went on, some strange auxiliaries. Suddenly there were

added to it two officers and 120 men of the Northumberland Fusiliers. They were the grenadier company of that battalion, who had been lent to Hill 60, and had already been eight days in the trenches. Bearded, weary, and hungry, this company, marching back to rejoin their division, fell in with Geddes's Detachment, and took their place in its firing line. That night the old "Fighting Fifth" lived up to its fame.

On the morning of Friday, 23rd, the situation was as follows: The 27th Division was in its old position, as was the 28th, save that the latter was much depleted by the supports which it had dispatched westwards, and was strung out in its trenches like a string of beads, one man to every twelve yards. The Canadian 2nd Brigade was intact, but the 3rd Brigade was bent back so as to cover St. Julien, whence the supporting Canadian battalions and Geddes's Detachment carried the line to the canal at Boesinghe. North of this the French held on to the east bank; but the Germans had crossed at various points, and had taken Lizerne and Het Sas, and were threatening Steenstraete. The British cavalry—General Allenby's three divisions and General Rimington's two Indian divisions—were being hurried up to support the French west of the canal. That day there was a severe artillery bombardment all along the front of the 28th Division, the Canadians, and Geddes's Detachment, especially from the heavy guns on the Passchendaele ridge. But the fighting was heaviest against the Canadian 3rd Brigade, which by now was in desperate straits. Its losses had been huge, and the survivors were still weak from the effects

of the gas. No food could reach it for twenty-four hours, and then only bread and cheese. Holding a salient, it suffered fire from three sides, and by the evening was driven to a new line through St. Julien. One company of the Buffs sent up by Geddes to support it was altogether destroyed. There were gaps in all this western front, and the Germans succeeded in working round the left of the 3rd Brigade, and even getting their machine guns behind it. By this time the Canadian line was held from right to left by the 5th, 8th, 15th, 13th, three companies of the 7th, and the 14th Battalions, from which Geddes's Detachment extended to the French.

About three o'clock on the morning of Saturday, the 24th, a violent artillery cannonade began. At 3.30 there came the second great gas attack, and of this we have full details. *April 24.*

The gas was pumped from cylinders, and, rising in a cloud, which at its maximum was seven feet high, it travelled in two minutes the distance between the lines. It was thickest close to the ground, and filled every cranny of the trenches. Our men had still no knowledge of it, and were provided with no prophylactics, but instinct taught some of them what to do. A wet handkerchief wrapped round the mouth gave a little relief, and it was best for a man to keep on his feet. It was fatal to run backwards, for in that case he followed the gas zone, and the exertion of rapid movement compelled deep breathing, and so drew the poison into the lungs. Its effect was to fill the lungs with fluid and produce acute bronchitis. Those smitten by it suffered horribly, gasping and struggling for

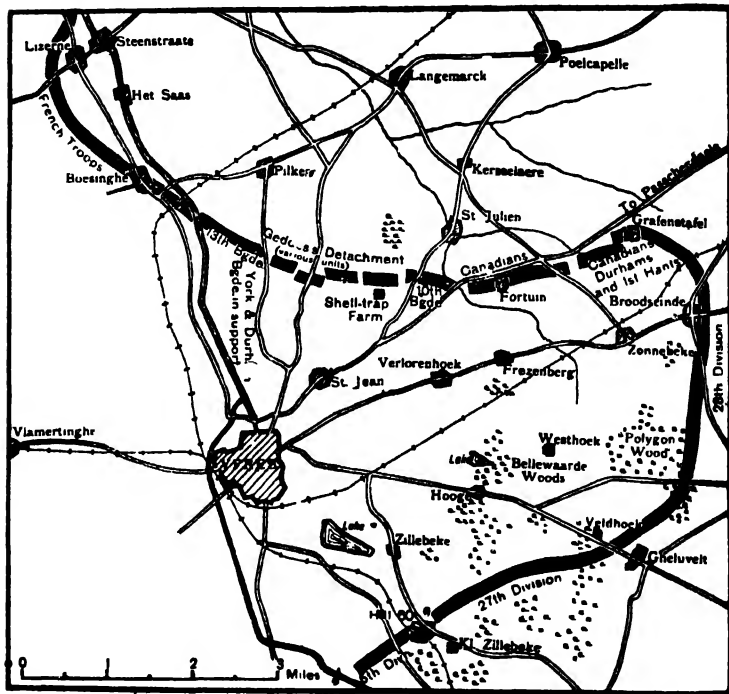
breath, with blue, swollen faces, and eyes bursting from the head. It affected the sight, too, and produced temporary blindness. Even a thousand yards from the place of emission men were afflicted with violent sickness and giddiness. After that it dissipated itself, and only the blanched herbage marked its track.

That day, the 24th, saw the height of the Canadians' battle. The much-tried 3rd Brigade, now gassed for the second time, could no longer keep its place. Its left fell back well to the south-west of St. Julien, gaps opened up in its front, and General Currie's 2nd Brigade was left in much the same position as that of the 3rd Brigade on Thursday evening. His left was compelled to swing south to conform; but Colonel Lipsett's 8th Battalion, which held the pivoting point on the Grafenstafel ridge—the extreme north-eastern point of our salient—did not move an inch. Although heavily gassed, they stayed in their trenches for two days until they were relieved. The 3rd Brigade, temporarily forced back, presently recovered itself, and regained much of the lost ground.

About midday a great German attack developed against the village of St. Julien and the section of our line immediately east of it. The 3rd Brigade was withdrawn some 700 yards to a new line south of the village and just north of the hamlet of Fortuin. The remnants of the 13th and 14th Battalions could not be withdrawn, and remained—a few hundred men—in the St. Julien line, fighting till far on in the night their hopeless battle with a gallantry which has shed eternal lustre on their Motherland. Scarcely less fine was the stand of Colonel Lipsett's

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 29

8th Battalion at Grafenstafel. Though their left was in the air they never moved, and at the most critical moment held the vital point of the British front. Had the Grafenstafel position gone, the enemy would in an hour have pushed behind the



• Second Battle of Ypres. The position on the evening of Saturday, April 24th.

28th Division and the whole eastern section. It is told how one machine-gun officer of the 7th—Lieutenant Bellew—with a defiant loaf stuck on his bayonet point above the parapet, fought his machine gun till it was smashed to pieces, and then con-

tinued the struggle with relays of rifles. Far on the west the French counter-attacked from the canal and made some progress, but the Germans were still strong on the west bank, and took Steenstraate, though the Belgian artillery succeeded in destroying the bridge behind them.

Meantime British battalions were being rushed up as fast as they could be collected. The 13th Brigade \* from the 5th Division took up position west of Geddes's Detachment, between the canal and the Pilkem road, and they were supported by the York and Durham Brigades of the Northumbrian Territorial Division, which had arrived from England only three days before. The 10th Brigade † from the 4th Division were coming up to support the 3rd Canadian Brigade south of St. Julien. To support the critical point at Grafenstafel the 8th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry Brigade of the Northumbrian Division, and the 1st Hampshires from the 4th Division, took their place between the 8th Canadians and the left of the 28th Division. The Canadians were gradually being withdrawn; the 3rd Brigade had already gone, and the Lahore Division and various battalions of the 4th were about to take over the whole of this part of the line.

But meantime an attempt was made to retake St. Julien. Early on the Sunday morning, about

*April 25.* 4.30, an attack was delivered by General Hull's 10th Brigade and two battalions

\* 2nd King's Own Scottish Borderers, 2nd West Riding, 1st Royal West Kent, 2nd Yorkshire Light Infantry. All four battalions had been engaged in the fight for Hill 60.

† 1st Warwicks, 2nd Seaforths, 1st Irish Fusiliers, 2nd Dublin Fusiliers, and 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Territorial).

of the York and Durham Brigade against the village. It was pushed up through the left centre of the Canadian remnant to the very edge of the houses, where it was checked by the numerous German machine guns. In the assault the 10th Brigade had desperate casualties, while the York and Durham battalions, which missed direction in the advance, lost 13 officers and 213 rank and file. On that day, so mixed was the fighting, General Hull had under him at one moment no less than fifteen battalions, as well as the whole artillery of the Canadian Division. Farther east the 8th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry Brigade at Grafenstafel was heavily attacked with asphyxiating shells—less deadly than the gas, but for the moment incapacitating—and at 2 p.m. a German attack was launched against its two front companies. From 2 to 7 p.m. they hung on, and then the pressure proved too great, and they fell back with heavy losses. Farther on, at the extreme eastern point of the front, the Germans made a resolute attempt with artillery and asphyxiating bombs on the line of the 28th Division at Broodseinde. The 85th Brigade, however, managed to hold its ground, and made many prisoners. The position on that Sunday night was that the British line from west to east was held by the 13th Brigade, part of the York and Durham Brigade, Geddes's Detachment, the 10th Brigade, more York and Durhams, the Lahore Division, the Hampshires, the 8th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry Brigade, and the 28th Division. Our front was intact on the east as far north as the Grafenstafel ridge, whence it ran in a generally western direction through Fortuin.

Monday, the 26th, was a day of constant and critical fighting, but we managed to get our reliefs in and take out the battalions which had been holding the pass since the terrible night of Thursday. The 3rd Canadian Brigade had retired on Saturday, the 2nd followed on Sunday evening. But on the Monday the latter, now less than 1,000 strong, was ordered back to the line, which was still far too thin, and, to the credit of their discipline, the men went cheerfully. They had to take up position in daylight, and cross the zone of shell fire—no light task for those who had lived through the past shattering days. That night they were relieved, and on Thursday the whole division was withdrawn from the Ypres Salient, after such a week of fighting as has rarely fallen to the lot of British troops. Small wonder that a thrill of pride went through the Empire at the tale, and that Canada rejoiced in the midst of her sorrow. Most of the officers were Canadian born, and never was there finer regimental leading. Three battalion commanders died—Colonel Birchall of the 4th, Colonel M'Harg of the 7th, and Colonel Boyle of the 10th. Many of the brigade staff officers fell. From the 5th Battalion only ten officers survived, five from the 7th, seven from the 8th, eight from the 10th. Of the machine-gun men of the 13th Battalion thirteen were left out of fifty-eight, in the 7th Battalion only one. Consider what these men had to face. Attacked and outflanked by four divisions, stupefied with a poison of which they had never dreamed, and which they did not understand, with no heavy artillery to support them, they endured till reinforcements came, and they did more



## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 29

than endure. After days and nights of tension they had the vitality to counter-attack. When called upon they cheerfully returned to the inferno they had left. If the Salient of Ypres will be for all time the classic battle-ground of Britain, that blood-stained segment between the Poelcapelle and Zonnebeke roads will remain the holy land of Canadian arms.

The Monday's fighting fell chiefly to the Northumbrian and Lahore Divisions, which had taken the Canadians' place. Let us glance at the several engagements along our front. The 13th Brigade on the left was not seriously troubled, nor was Geddes's Detachment, which that evening was broken up and the battalions returned to the 28th Division. Its gallant commander fell mortally wounded as he was leaving the trenches. At four in the morning the Germans attacked the two companies of the 8th Battalion of the Durham Light Infantry Brigade at Fortuin and enveloped them, so that they were compelled to fall back behind the Hannabeeke stream, from which in the evening they retired 400 yards to still another line. The other battalions of the brigade were ordered to advance to the Frezenberg ridge, so as to take the enemy in flank. They suffered heavily from shell fire, for the Germans were making a curtain behind us to prevent our receiving reinforcements. The Northumberland Brigade, under General Riddell,

\* Three Canadians won the Victoria Cross in this battle: Captain Francis Scrimger, the medical officer of the 14th Battalion; Colour-Sergeant Frederick Hall of the 8th, and Lance-Corporal Frederick Fisher of the 13th—both of whom fell.

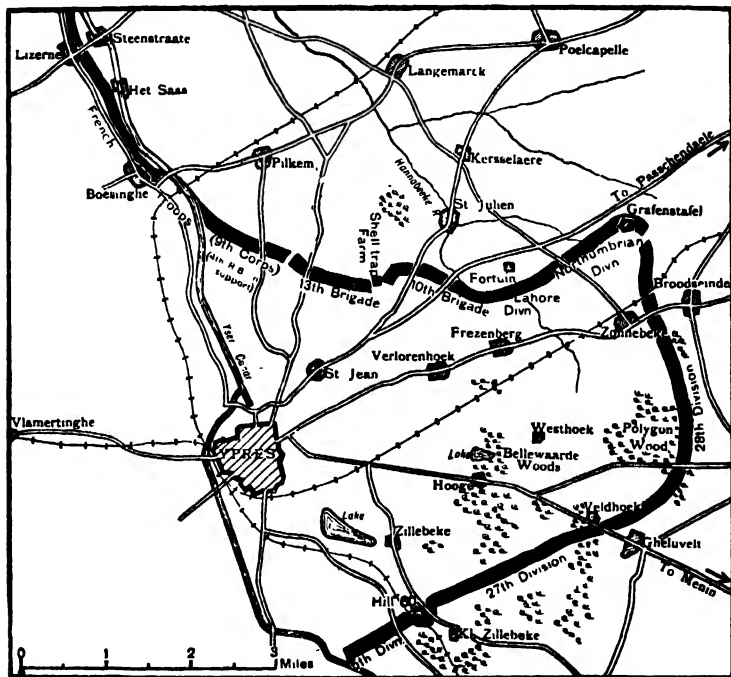
were ordered at 10.15 a.m. to move to Fortuin. Along with the Lahore Division they made an attack upon St. Julien. It was part of a general counter-attack by the Allies, which farther west led to the French retaking Lizerne and the trenches around Het Sas, and which did much to check the enemy's offensive and relieve the desperate pressure on our line. But the attack on St. Julien prospered ill. The Northumberland Brigade had had no time to reconnoitre the ground, it was held up by wire, and it received the worst of the shell fire. Its 6th Battalion managed to get 250 yards in advance of our front trenches, but could not hold the position. The Brigadier, General Riddell, fell at 3.30, and the Brigade lost 42 officers and some 1,900 men. Daylight attacks of this kind were impossible in the face of an enemy so well provided with guns, and the Lahore Division fared no better. Most of its battalions never got up through the fire curtain to our trenches. The 40th Pathans, the famous "Forty Thieves" of Indian military history, were among the chief sufferers. Their colonel fell, and nearly all their British officers were killed or wounded. There died Captain Dalmahoy, a soldier of exceptional gallantry and skill, who still led on his men after he had been six times hit.\*

Farther east, at Grafenstafel, there was fierce fighting. The 85th Brigade kept their line intact, but on their left, in a wood between the ridge and the Passchendaele road, there was a hot corner.

\* Jemadar Mir Dast of the 57th (Wilde's) Rifles led his platoon with great gallantry, and when all the British officers of the regiment had fallen collected the remnants and conducted the retirement. He received the Victoria Cross.

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 31.

By the evening they were compelled to give up the north-west section of the ridge, and our line was temporarily pierced at Broodseinde. That night we took up a slightly different line, which the map will explain. The 28th Division on the right



Second Battle of Ypres. Position on the evening of Monday, April 26th.

held its old front from the south-east corner of the Polygon Wood to just north of Zonnebeke and the eastern edge of the Grafenstafel ridge. Then our front bent south-west along the left bank of the Hannabeek stream to a point half a mile east of

St. Julien. There it turned south to the Vamheule farm on the Poelcapelle road. That farm should be noted; our men christened it Shelltrap Farm, and it played a great part in the later fighting. Thence it ran to just west of the Langemarck road, where it joined the French. The French line was now held by divisions of the 9th regular corps. The British line from left to right was held by the 13th Brigade, from the French to Shelltrap Farm; the 10th Brigade on to Fortuin; the Northumbrian Division, and the 28th Division, which had now for the most part received back its battalions from the western and central sections. The Lahore Division was being withdrawn, and the 11th and 12th Brigades of the 4th Division were on their way up. But there were odd fragments of other divisions in the front. The 4th Rifle Brigade, for example, from the 27th Division, was in support of the French; the 9th Royal Scots (Territorials) and the 2nd Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry from the same division had been in support of the Canadians since the night of the 22nd; and two companies of the Shropshire Light Infantry from the 80th Brigade were used to fill the gap between the Hampshires and the Royal Fusiliers at the Grafenstafel angle in the front of the 28th Division. The patchwork nature of our line made Staff work excessively difficult. Units and bits of units were brought up and used to strengthen weak places. We have seen the experience of the brigadier of the 10th Brigade on the 25th. General Prowse of the 11th Brigade a few days later found himself suddenly in command of twelve British battalions and three French.

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 33

We may pass over the next few days till the morning of Sunday, 2nd May. The British and French counter-attacked several times during these five days, and all our front was heavily shelled. On 1st May there was a desperate bombardment against the line of the 85th Brigade between Grafenstafel and Zonnebeke. On the last day of April the 12th Brigade,\* under General Anley, took over the line held by the 13th Brigade on the extreme left of the British section. On its right was the 10th Brigade from Shelltrap Farm to Fortuin. Then came the 11th Brigade,† holding 5,000 yards on the right of the northern section. On the 29th it was badly shelled, and the London Rifle Brigade lost 170 men. Next day it had to face a German thrust from St. Julien, which the Territorials drove back with machine-gun fire. The 10th Brigade held the old French second trenches, very badly made and awkwardly placed, but it is their boast that they never lost a trench. Beyond it was the 28th Division, holding 6,000 yards down to the Polygon Wood.

It was obvious that the 4th Division was holding far too long a line, and General Bulfin, who was in charge of the operations, resolved to shorten the front. The Ypres Salient had always been a danger. Now that it had been broken on the north there was no reason for maintaining a position which,

\* It had from left to right on its front the 2nd Essex, the 1st King's Own, and the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, with the 1st and Royal Irish in support and its two Territorial battalions in reserve.

† The London Rifle Brigade (Territorial), the 1st Somerset Light Infantry, the 1st Rifle Brigade, and the 1st Hampshire.

as the map shows, was open to assault upon three sides. We held what was virtually an oblong, five miles long by about three broad, with ugly corners at Grafenstafel and the Polygon Wood. Accordingly preparations were made for a bold retirement which would make of the Salient an easy curve with its farthest point under three miles from the town.

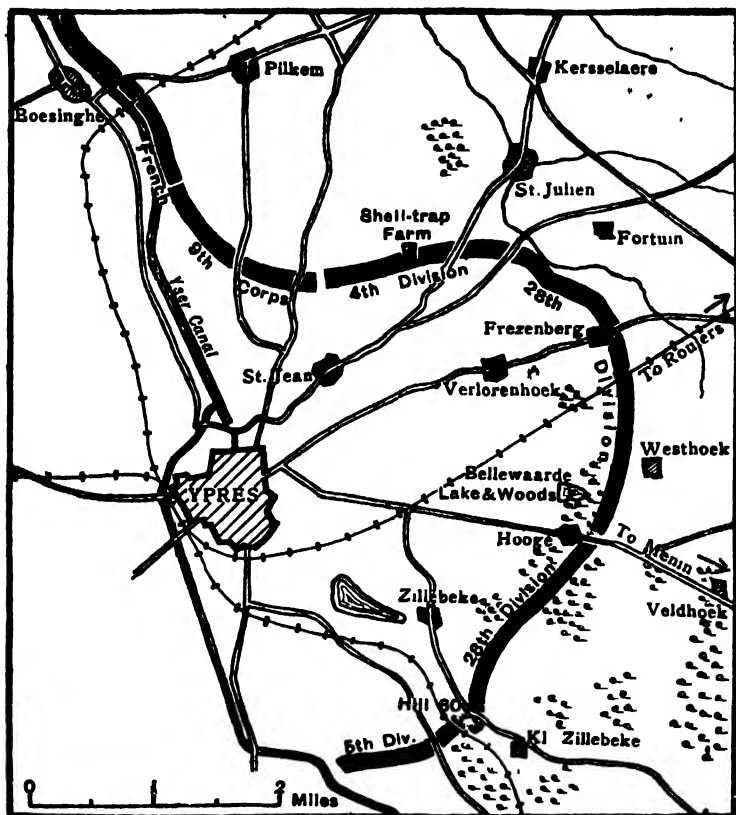
But first, on Sunday, 2nd May, we had to meet a new German attack. Gas and asphyxiating bombs were discharged both against the French on the Ypres Canal and the 4th Division east and west of Fortuin. The French were ready for it. Their 75 mm. guns mowed down the invaders, and the German position on that section was in no way improved. Against the British they fared little better. By this time our men had respirators—not yet of the best pattern—and they managed to let the gas blow past with little loss. The Lancashire Fusiliers and the Essex in the 12th Brigade suffered most, and gave way a little. The 2nd Seaforths of the 10th Brigade never moved. Their medical officer, Lieutenant James, a civilian doctor who had been with the regiment in South Africa, behaved with conspicuous courage, for, though badly affected by the gas, he continued for two days at his post. The 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, Territorials of the 10th Brigade, actually charged through the gas under Colonel Carden and took a German trench. The result was that the 4th Division, assisted by the 4th Hussars, who had come up as reinforcements from the 3rd Cavalry Brigade, succeeded in holding their ground. Many deeds of courage were reported for that day and for the fol-

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 35

lowing morning, when the 1st Rifle Brigade were attacked. Captain Railston of that battalion was buried alive by a shell ; then he was hit by a shell fragment, and left with only three men. Yet he managed to bluff the enemy and hold his trenches till relief came in the evening. Private Lynn of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers, a machine gunner who had already received the Distinguished Conduct Medal, played on the advancing gas with his guns, without putting on his respirator. He continued firing even when the cloud caught him. He then got his gun to the top of the parapet and kept off the German attack. For his heroic stand he received the Victoria Cross, but it cost him his life.

On 3rd May the time came to shorten the line. The 12th Brigade on our left did not move ; it was the pivot of the operation. Battalions were withdrawn piecemeal, and *May 3.* picked riflemen from each company were left to cover the retirement. This withdrawal, in perfect order, in a very short time, and with no losses, was one of the most creditable pieces of Staff work in the war. The work began as soon as the darkness fell. Every day of the fighting we had got in our wounded under cover of night, and in the cellars of Zonnebeke village operations had been performed by candlelight. That evening the wounded were evacuated, all but a small number of very bad cases whom it was impossible to move, and who were left behind in charge of two orderlies. The Royal Army Medical Corps have never done more brilliant work in all their brilliant history. Under the guidance of Colonel Ferguson, assisted

by Major Waggett (the well-known London specialist on throat diseases), the cases were brought from the cellars and dug-outs, and silently and swiftly



Second Battle of Ypres. Sketch showing the shortening of the line on May 3rd.

carried along the dark roads beyond the fire zone. The difficulty of such a withdrawal may be realized from the fact that at some places, such as Grafenstafel and Broodseinde, the Germans were within ten yards



## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 37

of our line. Not less than 780 wounded were removed from our front, and the retirement of the battalions was equally skilful. Not a single man was lost. The 85th Brigade had a difficult task, coming from the extreme north-eastern point of the Salient. The 11th, coming from Fortuin, had to move for nearly four miles down lines of parallel trenches. Most of the supplies and ammunition was removed, and what could not be carried was buried.

Touches of comedy were not wanting. The 83rd Brigade, on the right of the 28th Division, had constructed new and admirable trenches which they were loth to leave. One man solemnly cleaned and swept his dug-out before going, like a landlord preparing a house for a new tenant. The order to retire did not reach the last man of a score of picked shots who had been left to the end. He belonged to the 2nd Cheshires, and remained for more than an hour after our retirement, a solitary figure facing the whole army of Wurtemberg. Then he suddenly realized that he was very lonely, and fled westwards after his comrades. It was not till the early morning of the 4th that the Germans knew we had gone. For some time before that they had been busy shelling our empty trenches.

Our new line ran from the French west of the Langemarck road by Shelltrap Farm, along the Frezenberg ridge, and then due south, including the Bellewaarde Lake and Hooge, and curving round to the Zillebeke ridge and Hill 60. The 27th Division held it from near the latter point up to the Menin road, the 28th along the Frezenberg ridge to just east of Shelltrap, and the 4th Division

to the junction with the French. This line was at least three miles shorter than the old one, so it could be held with fewer troops, which gave a chance of rest to some of the brigades which had been most highly tried. The critical point was now our centre on the eastern front of the Salient, which ran from the Hannabeeke stream along the eastern face of the Frezenberg ridge. This ridge covered all the roads from Ypres by which our supplies and reinforcements travelled, and if the Germans should carry it our position would be gravely prejudiced. It is a ridge just as Hill 60 is a hill—by courtesy only; for the present writer, who visited the neighbourhood a week later, could barely detect the gentle swell among the flat meadows.

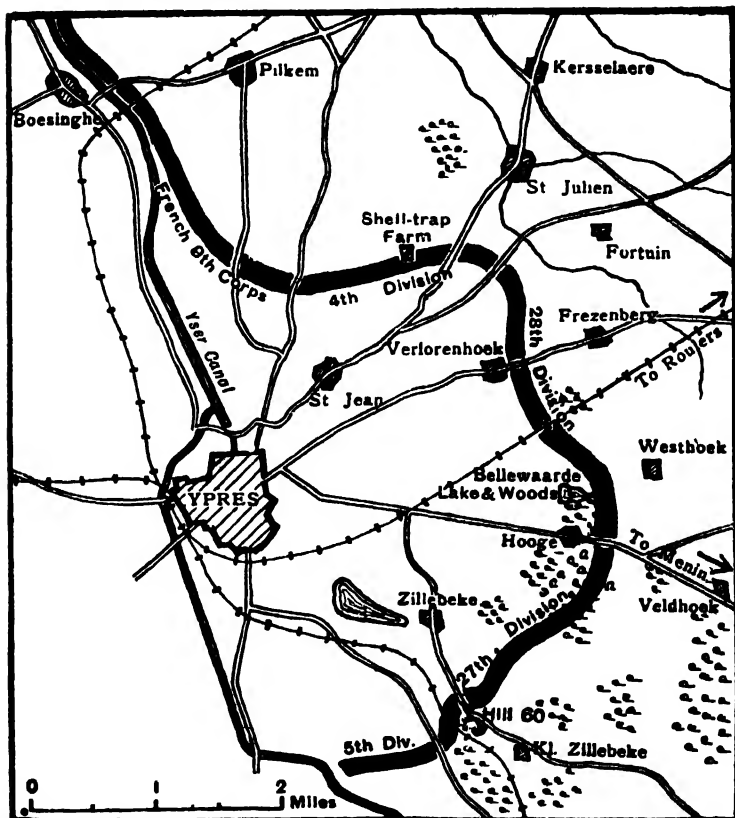
For the next three days there was little more than a heavy shelling. At the south-western extremity of the Salient, Hill 60 was recaptured by a German gas attack on 5th May. Early on the

*May 8.* morning of the 8th, about 5.30, there was an attack on the centre held by the 28th Division. The result of that day and of the

*May 9.* next, Sunday, the 9th, was that our line was pushed back west of the Frezenberg ridge till it ran east of the well-named hamlet of Verlornhoek, on the Zonnebeke road. The 1st Suffolks, in the 84th Brigade, were wiped out by shell fire, only seven men remaining. The 2nd Cheshires held back the enemy most valiantly till they had only one officer left. The 1st Yorkshire Light Infantry, in the 83rd Brigade, also suffered terribly. The Monmouths, a Territorial battalion who had done most gallantly, were in a precarious position, and another Territorial battalion, the 12th

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 39

London, was brought up to relieve them. They reached the trenches through a barrage of fire, and there they suffered like the Suffolks. The whole



Second Battle of Ypres. Position on the evening of Sunday, May 9th.

centre was driven in, all but the 1st Welsh, under Colonel Marden, who did not retire till they were ordered. They sent message after message back that theirs was a hot corner, but that they

were very comfortable, and could remain as long as they were wanted. Mention should be made also of the 9th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders (Territorials), who had 900 8-inch shells in their trenches, and still stayed in them. They counter-attacked brilliantly on the 11th, and lost their commander, Lieutenant-Colonel James Clark, one of the most gallant and well-beloved of leaders.

On the following Wednesday, the 12th, we made certain changes on our front thus further drawn in.

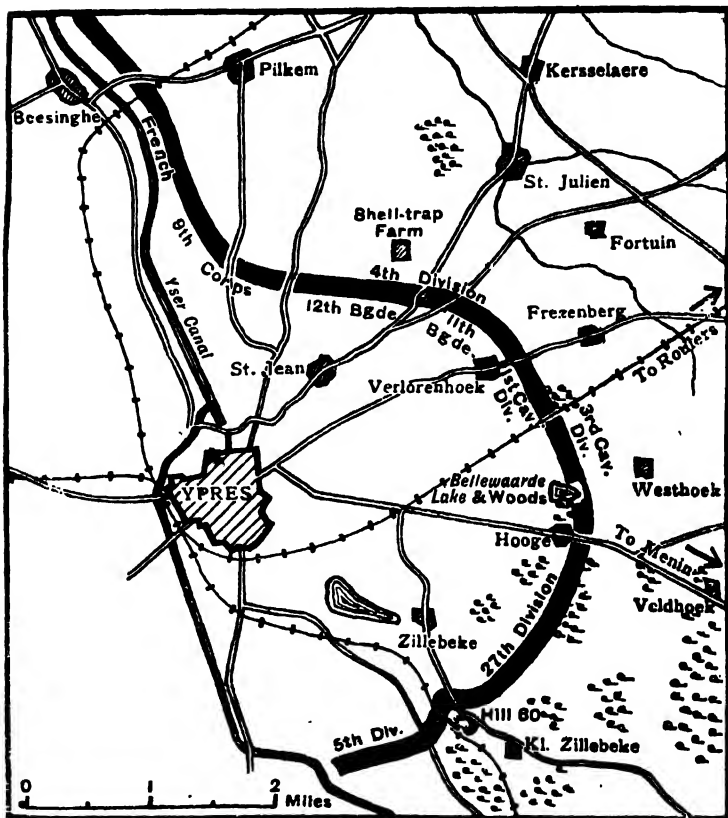
*May 12.* The 28th Division went into reserve. It had been fighting continuously since 22nd April, and its losses had been almost equal to those which the 7th Division had suffered in the First Battle of Ypres. Only one lieutenant-colonel was left, and most of its battalions were commanded by captains. Its place was now taken by a cavalry detachment, the 1st and 3rd Cavalry Divisions, under General De Lisle.\* The line was now held from left to right by the 12th Brigade, the 11th Brigade, and a battalion from the 10th Brigade of the 4th Division to a point north-east of Verlorenhoek. Then came the 1st Cavalry up to the Roulers railway, and the 3rd Division from the railway to the Bellewaarde Lake, whence the 27th Division continued the line to Hill 60. It was not a good

\* Important changes had now been made in the high commands. General Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien, who had acquitted himself so brilliantly in a long series of actions from Le Cateau to La Bassée, had relinquished the command of the Second Army, and his place had been taken by General Sir Herbert Plumer, the commander of the Fifth Corps. The Fifth Corps was now under General Allenby, and he in turn had handed over the Cavalry Corps to General Julian Byng, who had formerly commanded the 3rd Cavalry Division.

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 41

line; for we had no natural advantages, and our trenches were to a large extent recently improvised.

The cavalry took up their ground on the even-



Second Battle of Ypres. Position on the evening of.  
Wednesday, May 12th.

ing of Wednesday, 12th May. The 1st Division line was held from left to right by the 1st and 2nd Brigades, with the newly-formed 9th Brigade in reserve; that of the 3rd Division by the 6th and

7th Brigades, with the 8th Brigade in reserve. Early on the morning of Thursday, the 13th, a day of biting north winds and drenching rains, a terrific bombardment began against the cavalry front. The 2nd Brigade of the 1st Division were affected, and the 9th Lancers managed to hold their line, but the brunt fell on the 3rd Division. In a short space more than 800 shells fell on a line of little more than a mile. The 3rd Dragoon Guards, in the 6th Brigade, were almost buried alive, but the remaining regiment, the North Somerset Yeomanry, under Lieutenant-Colonel Geoffrey Glyn, did not yield their trenches, but actually charged and drove back the advancing Germans. General David Campbell brought up the Royals from his brigade reserve, and the line of the 6th Brigade remained intact. Not so the 7th Brigade on the right. There the shelling was too desperate for man to endure, and it fell back some hundreds of yards, making an ugly dent in our front, and leaving a gap between it and the right of the 6th Brigade. The 10th Hussars and the Blues were hurried up to fill the rent, and at 2.30 p.m. the whole 8th Brigade, under General Bulkeley-Johnson—the 10th, the Blues, and the Essex Yeomanry—made a counter-attack to recover the lost ground. They were assisted by a detachment of the Duke of Westminster's armoured motor cars, which did excellent work.

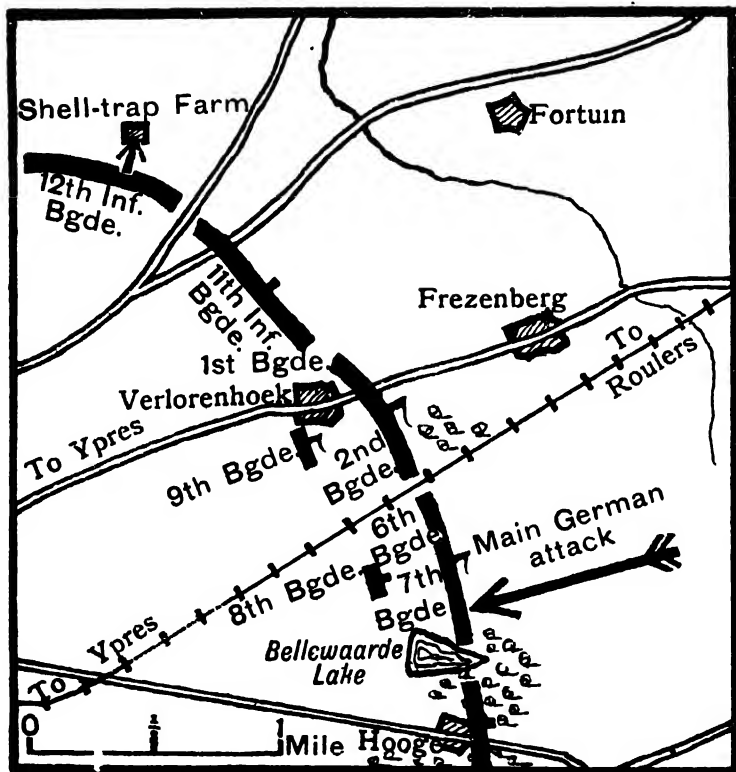
That charge of dismounted cavalry was one of the great episodes of the whole battle. The cavalry advanced as if on parade, so magnificent was their discipline. The 10th Hussars were conspicuous in the action, and Major Crichton by his gallantry added

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 43

lustre to a famous fighting name. The Essex Yeomanry, in company with the finest cavalry in the world, were equal to the best. The charge succeeded, for we took the lost ground; but it was beyond our power to hold it. The German heavy guns, exactly ranged, made the place a death-trap. By that evening this section of our line had fallen back in a sag between the Bellewaarde Lake and Verlorenhoek. For that day we paid a heavy price. In the 1st Division the 9th Lancers and 18th Hussars suffered much, and in the 3rd Division the Royals, the Blues, the 10th Hussars, and the three Yeomanry regiments were mere shadows of their former strength. As always in our battles, the toll of gallant officers was lamentably high.

On the same day the infantry on our left were fiercely attacked, but contrived to hold their ground. Two exploits may be specially noted. The London Rifle Brigade, a Territorial battalion, had lost most of its men in the earlier fighting. It began that day only 278 strong, and before evening 91 men more had gone. One piece of breastwork was held by Sergeant Douglas Belcher with four survivors and two Hussars whom he had picked up, and though the trench was blown in and the Germans attacked with their infantry, he succeeded in bluffing the enemy by rapid fire, and holding his ground till relief came. That gallant stand, for which the Victoria Cross was awarded, saved the right of the 4th Division. Farther on our left the 2nd Essex, the reserve battalion of the 12th Brigade, did no less brilliantly. Shelltrap Farm, between the Poelcapelle and Langemarck roads, had fallen into German hands. The Essex cleared it with the bayonet, and

all that day the place was taken and retaken, but we held it in the evening. The Essex, like the Welsh a few days before, were perfectly cheerful in their greatest peril. They continued to send



Second Battle of Ypres. The fight on the front held by the Cavalry, May 13th.

back messages—by a man who swam the moat—that they were very comfortable, and getting on well: comfort being a tangle of ruined masonry on which shells and machine guns played without ceasing.



## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 45

Battles in this war did not usually end with a great climax, but ebbed away in a series of lesser engagements. By this time our activity in the Festubert region and the vigorous thrust of the French towards Lens had compelled the Germans to move some of their heavy guns farther south. There remained, however, the deadly weapon of the gas, and before we close our tale we must record an instance of its use, the most desperate of all. After the 13th the 3rd Cavalry Division, which was now severely reduced, was withdrawn into reserve, and its place taken by the 2nd, under General Briggs. The early morning of Monday, the 24th, *May 24.* promised a perfect summer day, with a cloudless sky and a light north-easterly breeze. Just after dawn our front was bombarded with asphyxiating shells, and immediately after gas was released from the cylinders against the whole three miles of line from Shelltrap to the Bellewaarde Lake. The wind carried it south-westwards, so that it affected nearly five miles of front; the cloud in some places rose to forty feet, and for four and a half hours the emission continued. The chief sufferers were the infantry of the 4th Division, on our left. Where our men were handy with their respirators they managed to hold their ground, and the cavalry on the whole suffered little. After the gas came a violent bombardment from north, north-east, and east. The chief attacks were in the vicinity of Shelltrap, where the 9th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the 2nd Royal Irish suffered; against our front on the Roulers railway, and along the Menin road near Bellewaarde Lake; and in these areas we were forced back for some little distance.

The three salients which the enemy had now established did not profit him much, and before the evening our counter-attacks had re-established most of our line except in two places near Shelltrap and the Menin road. The day was a triumph for the cavalry, and their splendid steadfastness saved the infantry on their left and right.

The 9th Lancers, one of the most hardly-trying regiments in the British army, stuck to their trenches through the gas and the subsequent shelling, but they paid a heavy toll. Among those who fell was Captain Francis Grenfell, who had won the Victoria Cross for saving a battery of guns at Douron \* on 24th August, and who had not less distinguished himself in the fight of the cavalry at Messines on 1st November. In him the army lost one of its most heroic figures, a soldier whose influence in his own service cannot be overpraised. Francis Grenfell was an example of what by the grace of God an English gentleman might attain to. He was a brilliant sportsman, who played always for his side and never for himself, an able and indefatigable student of his profession, a leader who inspired a unique affection both among his men and his brother officers. As Clarendon wrote of Falkland: "Whosoever leads such a life need not care upon how short warning it be taken from him." His courage was no insensibility to danger, but the triumph of duty and devotion over all personal fears. His simplicity, his gentle courtesy, his tenderness to suffering, his passionate loyalty, his unostentatious goodness, will be an abiding and fruitful memory long after the last echoes of

\* Vol. II., p. 43.

## THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES. 47

the war have ceased. *Patriae quaesivit gloriam, videt Dei.*

The Second Battle of Ypres, as has been already said, was less critical than the first, for it was not fought to defeat any great strategical intention. It was an episode in the war of attrition, in which the Germans, by the use of heavy artillery and gas, caused us severe losses without gaining any special advantage of position. We still held the Ypres Salient—a diminished salient; but we lost so heavily that, so far as attrition went, the balance of success may be said to have been with the German side. On the other hand, the moral gain was ours. The Germans had a wonderful machine—a machine made up of great cannon firing unlimited quantities of high explosive shells, an immense number of machine guns, and the devilry of the poisoned gas. We had no such mechanism to oppose to theirs, and our men were prevented from coming to grips. The German infantry rarely made a serious attack, and when they did they were annihilated. Whenever we could get near them as man to man we destroyed them. On one occasion a battalion, exasperated to madness, stood up on their parapets and invited the enemy in abusive language to come on. Some accepted the invitation, upon which we cheered them—and accounted for them. The Second Battle of Ypres was the first event which really brought home to the British people the inferiority of our machine which handicapped our man-power, and it led indirectly to that reconstruction of the Government which we shall deal with in the next chapter.

The moral gain was ours, because no battle in the war so convinced us of our superiority in manhood, and inspired our troops with a stronger optimism or a more stubborn determination. We learned that we had now a homogeneous army, in which it was hard to say that one part was better than another. The Territorials, infantry and cavalry, whether they had been out since November or had left home a few days before, held their ground in the most nerve-racking kind of conflict with the valour and discipline of veterans. Some of their achievements we have recounted; they were not exceptions but the rule. The miners of South Wales and North England, the hinds and the mechanics of the Scottish Lowlands, the shepherds and gillies of the Highlands, the clerks and shopboys of London and the provincial cities, were alike in their fighting value. They were led, and often brilliantly led, by men who a little time before had been merchants, and solicitors, and architects. The present writer had the privilege of meeting most of the battalions that fought in the action as soon as they were withdrawn from the line, and the impression was unforgettable. One lean veteran had a year ago been a spruce clerk on the Stock Exchange, travelling to the City every morning in the sombre regimentals of his class. He looked now like a big-game hunter from Equatorial Africa. Another stern disciplinarian of a non-commissioned officer was a year ago a business man who cultivated tulips in his suburban garden. Now from him to Surbiton was a far cry. A grimy private from whom one asked the way answered in the familiar accents of Oxford. Two men, fresh from battle, and full of keen pro-

fessional interest, were once London shopwalkers. The change was very marked in the case of the Scots. The kilt as worn to-day has a somewhat formal and modern look, suggestive less of Rob Roy than of the Prince Consort. But watch that company of Camerons returning from a route march. The historic red tartans are ragged and faded, the bonnet has a jaunty air, the men have a long, loping stride. They might be their seventeenth-century forbears, slipping on a moonlight night through the Lochaber passes. Here is a battalion from the Borders. The ordinary Borderer in peace time looks like anybody else, but these men seem to have suddenly remembered their ancestry. They have the lean strength, the pale adventurous eye of the old Debatable Land.

There is an optimism which is far more merciless than any pessimism, for it knows the worst and is still unafraid. Our troops at Ypres had dwelt long in the valley of the Shadow of Death, and had trod the very pavements of hell. They came out of it silent, weary, bereaved, but unshaken in the faith. They knew themselves the better men in all that makes for human worth, and they knew that some day the German machine would be broken, and that then the human factor, which in the last resort gives victory, would prove its quality. That day might be delayed, though waited for as a sick man waits for morning, but its advent was as certain as the rising of the sun. From Ypres, too, they brought another bequest. They were resolved beyond all suspicion of a doubt to conquer, for they now understood that they were fighting the enemies of the human race. The news of

the sinking of the *Lusitania* on 7th May, added to the horrors of the gas, worked a strange transformation in our good-humoured and tolerant soldiery. It filled them with a seriousness beyond anything in their history. It was not hatred, for it had nothing personal in it; it was a resolve that an unclean thing should altogether disappear from the world.

The present writer first saw Ypres from a little hill during the later stages of the battle. It was a brilliant spring day, and, when there was a lull in the bombardment and the sun lit up its white towers, Ypres looked a gracious and delicate little city in its cincture of green. It was with a sharp shock of surprise that one realized that it was an illusion, that Ypres had become a shadow. A few days later, in a pause of the bombardment, he entered the town. The main street lay white and empty in the sun, and over all reigned a deathly stillness. There was not a human being to be seen in all its length, and the houses on each side were skeletons. There the whole front had gone, and bedrooms with wrecked furniture were open to the light. There a 42-cm. shell had made a breach in the line, with raw edges of masonry on both sides, and a yawning pit below. In one room the carpet was spattered with plaster from the ceiling, but the furniture was unbroken. There was a Buhl cabinet with china, red plush chairs, a piano, and a gramophone—the plenishing of the best parlour of a middle-class home. In another room was a sewing-machine, from which the owner had fled in the middle of a piece of work. Here was

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a novel with the reader's place marked. It was like a city visited by an earthquake which had caught the inhabitants unawares, and driven them shivering to a place of refuge.

Through the gaps in the houses there were glimpses of greenery. A broken door admitted to a garden—a carefully-tended garden, for the grass had once been trimly kept, and the owner must have had a pretty taste in spring flowers. A little fountain still plashed in a stone basin. But in one corner an incendiary shell had fallen on the house, and in the heap of charred debris there were human remains. Most of the dead had been removed, but there were still bodies in out-of-the-way corners. Over all hung a sickening smell of decay, against which the lilacs and hawthorns were powerless. That garden was no place to tarry in.

The street led into the Place, where once stood the great Church of St. Martin and the Cloth Hall. Those who knew Ypres before the war will remember the pleasant façade of shops on the south side, and the cluster of old Flemish buildings at the north-eastern corner. Words are powerless to describe the devastation of these houses. Of the southern side nothing remained but a file of gaunt gables. At the north-east corner, if you crawled across the rubble, you could see the remnants of some beautiful old mantelpieces. Standing in the middle of the Place, one was oppressed by the utter silence, a silence which seemed to hush and blanket the eternal shelling in the Salient beyond. Some jackdaws were cawing from the ruins, and a painstaking starling was rebuilding its nest in a broken pinnacle. An old cow, a miserable object,

was poking her head in the rubbish and sniffing curiously at a dead horse. Sound was a profanation in that tomb which had once been a city.

The Cloth Hall had lost all its arcades, most of its front, and there were great rents everywhere. Its spire looked like a badly-whittled stick, and the big gilt clock, with its hands irrevocably fixed, hung loose on a jet of stone. St. Martin's Church was a ruin, and its stately square tower was so nicked and dented that it seemed as if a strong wind would topple it over. Inside the church was a weird sight. Most of the windows had gone, and the famous rose window in the southern transept lacked a segment. The side chapels were in ruins, the floor was deep in fallen stones, but the pillars still stood. A mass for the dead must have been in progress, for the altar was draped in black, but the altar stone was cracked across. The sacristy was full of vestments and candlesticks tumbled together in haste, and all were covered with yellow picric dust from the high explosives. In the graveyard behind there was a huge shell crater, fifty feet across and twenty feet deep, with human bones exposed in the sides. Before the main door stood a curious piece of irony. An empty pedestal proclaimed from its four sides the many virtues of a certain Belgian statesman who had been also mayor of Ypres. The worthy mayor was lying in the dust beside it, a fat man in a frock coat, with side-whiskers and a face like Bismarck.

Out in the sunlight there was the first sign of human life. A detachment of French Colonial *tirailleurs* entered from the north—brown, shadowy men in fantastic weather-stained uniforms. A



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vehicle stood at the cathedral door, and a lean and sad-faced priest was loading it with some of the church treasures—chalices, plate, embroidery. A Carmelite friar was prowling among the side alleys looking for the dead. It was like some *macabre* imagining of Victor Hugo.

The ruins of old buildings are so familiar that they do not at first dominate the mind. Far more arresting are the remnants of the pitiful little homes, where there is no dignity, but a pathos which cries aloud. Ypres was like a city destroyed by an earthquake ; that is the simplest and truest description. But the skeletons of her great buildings, famous in Europe for five hundred years, left another impression. One felt, as at Pompeii, that things had always been so ; one felt that they were verily indestructible, they were so great in their fall. The cloak of St. Martin was not needed to cover the nakedness of his church. There was a terrible splendour about these gaunt and broken structures, these noble, shattered façades, which defied their destroyers. Ypres might be empty and a ruin, but to the end of time she would be no mean city.

One of the truest of our younger poets, Rupert Brooke, who died while serving in the Dardanelles, wrote in his last months a sonnet on the consolation of death in war.

“ If I should die, think only this of me :  
That there's some corner of a foreign field  
That is for ever England. There shall be  
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed.”

In the Salient of Ypres there are not less than a hun-

dred thousand graves of Allied soldiers, sometimes marked by plain wooden crosses, sometimes obliterated by the debris of ruined trenches, sometimes hidden in corners of fields and beneath clumps of chestnuts. That ground is for ever England; and it is also for ever France, for there the men of Dubois died around Bixschoote and on the Klein Zillebeke ridge. When the war is over this triangle of meadowland, with a ruined city for its base, will be an enclave of Belgian soil consecrated as the holy land of two great peoples. It may be that it will be specially set apart as a memorial place; it may be that it will be unmarked, and that the country folk will till and reap as before over the vanishing trench lines. But it will never be common ground. It will be for us the most hallowed spot on earth, for it holds our bravest dust, and it is the proof and record of a new spirit. In the past when we have thought of Ypres we have thought of the British flag preserved there, which Clare's Regiment, fighting for France, captured at the Battle of Ramillies. The name of the little Flemish town has recalled the divisions in our own race and the centuries-old conflict between France and Britain. But from now and henceforth it will have other memories. It will stand as a symbol of unity and alliance—unity within our Empire, unity within our Western civilization, that true alliance and that lasting unity which are won and sealed by a common sacrifice.

## CHAPTER LI....

### THE POLITICAL SITUATION : BRITAIN AND ITALY.

Public Opinion in Britain—Causes of Uneasiness—The Munitions Question—Disabilities of Politicians—Mr. Asquith's Newcastle Speech—Resignation of Lord Fisher—Formation of a National Ministry—Merits of Reconstruction—Temper of British People—The Italian Situation—Salandra and Giolitti—Sonnino—The Diplomatic Duel with Vienna—Work of Prince Buelow—Austria's Compensation Proposals—Salandra resigns—Italian Chamber approves War—War declared against Austria—The True Motives of Italy.

**D**URING April there was discernible in Britain a growing uneasiness about certain aspects of the conduct of the war. There was no distrust of our generals in the field or our admirals on the sea ; still less was there any weakening in warlike purpose. But it was gradually becoming apparent that the mechanism of national effort was faulty, and did insufficient justice to the resolution of the nation. Ever since the beginning of the year certain events had compelled thinking men to re-examine their views, and certain other events had produced in ordinary people that vague disquiet which ends in a clamour for change.

The Second Battle of Ypres, with its heavy casualties, did much to foster this feeling. No totals were issued at the time, but the endless lists of names published in the press did more to un-

nerve the public mind than any totals. In June the Prime Minister announced the casualties in the war by land up to 31st May as 258,069, of which 50,342

*May 31.* were dead, 153,980 wounded, and 53,747 missing. On 4th February the total had been 104,000, with about 10,000 dead. In four months, therefore, without any conspicuous success or any battle comparable to the first Ypres, we had multiplied our losses by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , and our dead by five. Then there was the Dardanelles affair, for which we were projecting a land expedition. Much violent and ill-informed criticism in the press and a perpetual tattle in private life had convinced many people that a great disaster was imminent, and the high hopes of the early spring changed to forebodings.

Germany's submarine campaign was also a source not of depression, but of irritation, and irritation means presently a demand for some more effective policy. Our losses were indeed trifling, as

*May 19.* compared with German boasting. On 19th May it was three months since the great "blockade" had been instituted, and during that time we had lost fifty ships—one-sixth per cent. of those which had arrived at or left our ports. In the later weeks Germany had waged war against trawlers to improve her average, and in one week no less than seventeen trawlers and drifters were sunk. It was relatively a small loss, but it was a loss; it involved many valuable lives; and, above all, we had not succeeded in accounting for any considerable number of enemy submarines. Then on 7th May came the news of the sinking of an unarmed liner, the *Lusitania*, with nearly 1,500 souls.

The news threw Germany into transports of delight; and roused in our own people a deep and abiding anger, of which anti-German riots in London and elsewhere were the smallest symptoms. It was generally felt that the war for the ordinary man had taken on a new character. Henceforward for the least well-informed it was a strife *à outrance*, and the people began to look about them to make sure that nothing was left undone.

During these weeks, too, the limited number who turned their minds to economic problems were beginning to be seriously disquieted. We had conducted the war on a lavish scale, and clearly there had been much avoidable waste. The foolish doctrine that expenditure was a good thing in itself, since it increased the circulation of wealth, seemed to have captured the minds of those responsible for our outlay. It was certain that we must find out of our savings or our capital at least another £600,000,000 a year, if we were to provide the Government with money to meet our current war expenditure and pay other nations for our colossal purchases. It was probable that the debit balance against us in our external indebtedness would be something like £400,000,000 a year. This could only be reduced by the practice by all classes of a rigid economy; failing that, we should be obliged to export gold to balance the account, or see the exchange go heavily against us, and perhaps lose our premier position as the financial centre of the world. But few in authority emphasized the danger. We spoke and behaved as if our purse were bottomless.

More important, because more generally understood, was the shortage in munitions—in rifles, in

machine guns, and especially in high explosive shells. A diligent inquest began to be made about this time with a view of fixing responsibility—a barren and intricate task which might well have been left alone. In the last instance the whole nation was responsible, for we started the war inadequately prepared. At the same time comparison with Germany was futile, for no nation can be adequately prepared unless, like Germany, it intends war; and Britain, like France, paid the penalty of her honest desire for peace. A more serious charge was that, when the nature of the war revealed itself, we did not recognize the necessity for organizing the manufacture of munitions on a scale corresponding to the organization of our new armies. It is to the eternal credit of Lord Kitchener that he saw from the start the need of preparing armies on the grand scale, and with this herculean task before him—one of the greatest tasks ever undertaken by a British Minister—it was scarcely to be wondered at if he could not spare the time to organize munitions in a similar fashion. It is the duty of a Government, and more especially of its head, to think out questions for which the busy departmental officers have not the leisure, to take long views, to colligate departmental activities, and to supplement departmental deficiencies. Clearly this work was not adequately performed by Lord Kitchener's civilian colleagues. It may be said, and rightly said, that a war reveals unexpected needs, and that the demand for high explosives which was so urgent in April could scarcely have been foreseen. There is reason to believe that, till the early spring, artillery experts spoke with a divided voice; and when

the expert is uncertain the civilian Minister is helpless. But the charge, for which there seemed good foundation, was not that a particular explosive was not forthcoming, but that the machinery for providing munitions of any sort, on a scale commensurate with the *personnel* we were providing, was not organized when the new armies were first raised. Here, again, it was idle to blame individuals. Our misfortune was the result of the kind of political system which the British people had tolerated for a generation, with its strife between party caucuses and the consequent disinclination to tell the nation unpalatable truths. Again, in a crisis like a great war the one thing required is high administrative talent. But in normal times this was at a discount. What led a politician to fame was skill in debate and platform rhetoric. Even if he possessed administrative gifts and did well by his department, he got less thanks for his work than for a hectic platform campaign which did service to his party. Now all these pleasing talents were valueless. It was unfair to blame the politicians for not possessing what they never had claimed to possess, for not cultivating a thankless administrative efficiency in a world where the prizes fell to him who could tinkle most loudly and most continuously the party cymbal.

When France after the Battle of the Marne realized the nature of the coming war and her lack of shells and heavy guns, she set to work at once to supply her deficiencies. Every factory which could be turned to the purpose was utilized ; every scrap of talent in the nation was called upon ; local committees were formed everywhere to organize

the effort ; and the result was that early in the new year France had multiplied her material by six, and was in the way to multiply it by nine. She had one great advantage in her conscript system, which enabled her to produce munitions under military law and to bring back her skilled workers from the trenches and send the less useful to take their place. In Britain our need, not less great and far more difficult to meet, was not fully recognized till the February strikes brought the matter to a head. In a previous chapter we have endeavoured to show that these strikes sprang from a variety of causes, and were by no means entirely the fault of the workmen. Mr. Lloyd George addressed himself to the problem with zeal and courage. He spoke the naked truth, though his candour was somewhat discounted by the official optimism of the press and his colleagues. He fastened upon drink as the chief cause of the evil, and announced a drastic policy of prohibition. Various eminent people proclaimed their intention of foregoing the use of alcohol during the war, but their example was not generally followed. Mr. Lloyd George, under pressure of political opinion, was forced to whittle down his scheme into a device for a few new taxes, which presently were dropped as manifestly unworkable.

The truth is that it was idle to seek for any single cause of the unfortunate situation. The causes were many, but they sprang all from one tap-root—the fact that the nation had not been organized for war, and that so long as it remained unorganized we were fighting, whatever our spirit, with one hand tied up. Our voluntary recruiting, splendid in its enthusiasm, worked unfairly and wastefully.



Skilled workers in vital industries had been allowed to go to the trenches, and others who would have been good soldiers in the firing line had been sent back to a work in which they had no particular skill. The compulsion of recruiting posters and public opinion was drastic, but it was unscientific. Many men in these days who still believed in voluntarism as the system best suited to the British temper were driven to modify their views, and to accept some form of State compulsion as at any rate the proper measure for a crisis. A common basis of agreement between the different schools was found in the desire for some kind of national registration, which would enable the State to use any special powers it might assume to the best advantage.

Various expedients were tried in the first instance to meet the difficulty. After our British fashion, we appointed a number of committees to deal with the munitions question. There were the original committee appointed by the Prime Minister in the second month of war, Sir George Askwith's Committee on Production, the Labour Advisory Committee, Mr. George Booth's War Office Committee, and the combined War Office and Admiralty Committee over which Mr. Lloyd George presided. These committees occupied the time of many very able men, and succeeded in getting in their own way and the way of willing manufacturers.

On 20th April the Prime Minister made a speech at Newcastle in which occurred this passage: "I saw a statement the other *April 20.* day that the operations of war, not only of our army

but of our Allies, were being crippled, or at any rate hampered, by our failure to provide the necessary ammunition. There is not a word of truth in that statement. I say there is not a word of truth in that statement, which is the more mischievous because, if it was believed, it is calculated to dishearten our troops, to discourage our Allies, and to stimulate the hopes and activities of our enemies." Unfortunately the speaker was misinformed, for the statement was literally true. Every soldier at the front had learned the lesson of Neuve Chapelle. High explosive shells were necessary in attack, for they alone could destroy the enemy's wire entanglements and parapets, and enable infantry to advance without desperate loss. They were necessary in defence, for without them we could not subdue the fire of the enemy's heavy guns.

Presently we had dramatic proof of this truth. Two days after the Prime Minister's speech the struggle began on the Ypres salient. We were almost without heavy artillery, and what we had was very short of shells. The Germans had at least fifty heavy guns in action, and endless munitions. We beat off the attack in the end, but with a terrible sacrifice. The lives of our soldiers were the price we paid for our deficiency in high explosives. Again, on Sunday, 9th May, we made an attack from Fromelles against the Aubers ridge. Our artillery preparation was necessarily inadequate, our men were held up by unbroken wire and parapets, and the result was failure and heavy losses. On the other hand, the French in their great movement towards Lens about the same date had 1,100 guns firing all day with the rapidity of maxims.

In one restricted area they placed 300,000 shells. As a consequence, the whole countryside was sterilized and flattened, nothing remained but a ploughed field with fragments of wire and humanity, and the infantry could advance almost as safely as on parade. The lesson was writ too plain to be misread. We must pay either in shells or in human lives.

The temper of the people was becoming intolerant of smooth speeches. A press campaign began, which led to the virulent abuse of certain newspapers, but which on the whole did good. Unhappily, as is usual in such campaigns, there was an attempt to find a scapegoat, and to fasten the blame on individuals, and in this case blame was apportioned with a singular lack of judgment. But the finishing touch was given by a perfectly irrelevant episode. Mr. Winston Churchill had rendered services to the nation at the outbreak of war for which his countrymen can never be sufficiently grateful. His ardent spirit, his high courage, and his quick if not always judicious intelligence made him take great risks and afford endless material for his critics. In easy-going ministerial circles he moved like a panther among seals. No doubt he made mistakes, but he was usually selected to be blamed for decisions for which his colleagues were not less responsible. For some time there had been disagreements between him and the First Sea Lord, and on or before May 18th Lord *May* 18. Fisher resigned. This incident brought matters to a head. There were no alternatives before the Government except to go out of office, or to reconstruct on a broader basis. On 19th May the

Prime Minister announced the formation of a National Ministry. It would have come *May 19.* with a better grace eight months earlier ; but Ministers are human, and so long as things seem to be going well they are anxious to keep the credit for themselves. It is only responsibility, when it looks as if it may be heavy, that they are ready to share. Now that the smooth self-confidence of the early days had gone, they were anxious to make all parties responsible for the conduct of the war. This, rather than a resolve to mobilize the best talent in the country, seems to have been the motive of the change. Sir Edward Grey and Lord Kitchener of course remained at their posts ; in them the country had the completest confidence. Mr. Churchill was given the Duchy of Lancaster, so that his great abilities were not lost to the Cabinet councils. Lord Lansdowne brought to the common stock his unique administrative experience, Mr. Austen Chamberlain his financial knowledge, Mr. Bonar Law his business talents, and Lord Curzon his penetrating intelligence and boundless energy. By the appointment of Lord Robert Cecil to the Under-Secretaryship of Foreign Affairs the Ministry was strengthened by a man of first-rate ability and courage. Mr. Balfour, the greatest intellect which our time has seen in British politics, went to the Admiralty. One of the ironies of the situation was the retirement of Lord Haldane, the man of all the previous Government who had done most for the British army. If he was misled by Germany, he erred in company with almost the whole nation, and at any rate he had given us an Expeditionary Force, a General Staff, and an admirable

Territorial levy—gifts which those who remember the start of the South African War will rate at their proper value. The root of his offending in the eyes of his critics was that he had owed much to German literature and philosophy, and had had the generosity to acknowledge his debt.

The reconstruction of the Government awakened little interest in the people at large. The old political game was out of fashion, and the bitter cry of the wire-pullers passed unheeded. The one vital fact was the creation of a new department, a Ministry of Munitions, which should take over all the responsibility for *matériel* which had fallen upon the Secretary for War, and should also assume some of the powers hitherto belonging to other departments. The selection of Mr. Lloyd George for the post—it was understood that he would be assisted by Lord Curzon—was universally approved. His imagination, his zeal, and the deep seriousness with which he faced the war, had profoundly impressed his countrymen. He had not only the power of kindling enthusiasm by his remarkable eloquence, but he had the courage to speak plain truths to his quondam supporters. He did not despair of the republic, and he had the intellectual honesty to jettison old prejudices and look squarely at facts. The Coalition had also the useful result that it demobilized the respective caucuses and allowed criticism greater liberty. Henceforward there was no obligation upon a Liberal to spare the Ministry from party loyalty or a Unionist from motives of good taste. The Government was now the whole people's to applaud or censure.

A review of political accidents is apt to leave

a false impression of the temper of a nation. At this juncture the British people were a little dashed in spirits, but there was no serious pessimism, and there was certainly no weakening. It is instructive to remember the history of the great war with Napoleon, and to reflect how many of the best brains then in England were out of sympathy with the national cause. In this struggle we had no Fox or Sheridan to lavish praise upon the enemy and lament in secret a British victory. The working classes and their official spokesmen were most earnest and practical in their determination to carry the war to the end, and many a man who had imagined that he was a cosmopolitan discovered that he was a patriot. Such slender opposition as there was came from that class whom we call *intellectuels* because of the limitations of their intellect. There were a few honest opponents of all war, who imagined that by saying that a thing was horrible often enough and loud enough you could get rid of the thing. A paradoxical litterateur secured a brief moment in the limelight by foolish utterances. There were protests from men who, physically unwholesome, felt that pain was the worst of all evils, and from those who, having no creed or faith, and staking everything upon the present world, regarded loss of life as the ultimate calamity. One or two amiable sentimentalists professed that we must not humiliate Germany, apparently under the delusion that a barbarian may become a good citizen if only you can avoid hurting his feelings. A few political *déclassés* attempted to redeem their insignificance by venting their spite on their country. But the opposition was, in Burke's famous meta-

phor,\* like the twittering of grasshoppers in a meadow where the kine graze undisturbed.

In an earlier chapter we have discussed the political situation in Italy during the first months of war. The country seemed almost equally divided between Interventionists and Neutralists, though it is probable that on a plebiscite the former would have had a large majority. The latter class was composed of the extreme clericals, who distrusted France and Russia on religious grounds, a small aristocratic section who saw in Germany a bulwark against socialism, the extreme socialists who followed a pacifist and anti-national tradition, and a great body of ordinary middle-class people who asked only for a quiet life. Much of the capital employed in the development of North Italy was German; the banking system was largely in German hands; and at first it seemed as if the commercial interests of the country would be strongly ranged on the side of neutrality. Against this stood the potent tradition of the Risorgimento, a national antipathy to the Teutonic character, and a popular revulsion against the barbarism and arrogance of Germany's creed.

The situation was complicated by what seemed

\* "Because half a dozen grasshoppers under a fern make the field ring with their importunate chink, whilst thousands of great cattle, reposed beneath the shadow of the British oak, chew the cud and are silent, pray do not imagine that those who make the noise are the only inhabitants of the field; that, of course, they are many in number; or that, after all, they are other than the little, shrivelled, meagre, hopping, though loud and troublesome, insects of the hour."—*Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

a parliamentary stalemate. In March 1914 Signor Antonio Salandra had succeeded Signor Giolitti as Premier. He was believed to have favoured war from the start; but his Foreign Secretary, the Marquis di San Giuliano, had leanings towards Germany, and this fact was instrumental in maintaining neutrality. In December San Giuliano died, and was succeeded in office by Baron Sidney Sonnino, in whose ancestry there were Jewish and British elements. Baron Sonnino had been twice Premier, and had done much by his upright and straightforward methods to purify public life and to restore the economic prosperity of his country. On the other side stood Signor Giolitti, four times Premier, and the most powerful political influence in Italy. Of the 508 members of the Chamber of Deputies over 300 were believed to be his followers. Though he supported Signor Salandra, it looked as if he held the Ministry in the hollow of his hand. Enthusiasm was foreign to his nature; he was an opportunist, and not without reason, like the majority of his countrymen. He desired certain gains for his nation, but preferred bargaining to war.

Baron Sonnino's appearance at the Foreign Office meant the beginning of a long and intricate diplomatic duel, in which the Italian Minister conducted his case with remarkable skill and discretion. Early in December he took his stand upon the terms of the Triple Alliance, especially Article VII.\* That clause, he reminded Count Berch-

\* "Austria-Hungary and Italy, who have solely in view the maintenance, as far as possible, of the territorial *status quo* in the East, engage themselves to use their influence to prevent all territorial changes which might be disadvantageous



told, the Austro-Hungarian Foreign Minister, bound Austria not to occupy any Balkan territory without a previous agreement with Italy, and without adequately compensating her. Italy had the deepest interest in preserving the integrity and independence of Serbia: Austria had invaded Serbia, and so disturbed the whole political gravity of the Balkans; compensation was due to Italy, and he invited Austria to discuss its terms. Count Berchtold replied that Italy could have no grievance, because the Austrian occupation of Serbian territory was "neither temporary nor permanent, but momentary." Upon this Baron Sonnino reminded him that in April 1912 Austria had protested against the Italian bombardment of the Dardanelles, and had prohibited even the use of searchlights against the Turkish coast. She had declared that such acts were an infringement of Article VII., and threatened that "if the Italian Government desired

to the one or the other of the Powers signatory of the present Treaty. To this end they will give reciprocally all information calculated to enlighten each other concerning their own intentions and those of other Powers. Should, however, the case arise that, in the course of events, the maintenance of the *status quo* in the territory of the Balkans or of the Ottoman coasts and islands in the Adriatic or the Ægean Seas becomes impossible, and that, either in consequence of the action of a third Power or for any other reason, Austria-Hungary or Italy should be obliged to change the *status quo* for their part by a temporary or permanent occupation, such occupation would only take place after previous agreement between the two Powers, which would have to be based upon the principle of a reciprocal compensation for all territorial or other advantages that either of them might acquire over and above the existing *status quo*, and would have to satisfy the interests and rightful claims of both parties."

to regain its liberty of action the Austro-Hungarian Government would do the same."

The diplomatic honours at this point lay with Baron Sonnino. Prince Buelow, the German Chancellor, was hurried to Rome, and a complex game of intrigue began. The aim of the Austrian diplomatists was to play for time, but Baron Sonnino pinned them to the question—"What compensations are you prepared to offer for a breach of the Triple Alliance which you are obliged to admit?" Austria was quite willing to offer these from other people's territory, but this Italy declined to consider. Germany now took a hand. Prince Wedel, who was at Vienna, pressed Austria to surrender the Trentino, and Prince Buelow at Rome urged Baron Sonnino not to ask for Trieste. Meanwhile Italy was putting her army on a war basis, and throughout the winter bought large quantities of military stores. In February the Chamber met, and the dullness of the sittings led to a general opinion that Prince Buelow had succeeded. In March rumours of intervention revived with the activity of the Allied fleets in the Dardanelles. Italians in America began to close their German accounts, and many Germans in Italy made preparations for departure.

On 9th March Baron Burian, who had succeeded Count Berchtold, under pressure from Germany

*March 9.* accepted the principle that compensation must be made from Austrian territory. Baron Sonnino replied that the negotiations must take place at once, and must be between Italy and Austria, without any German intervention. Prince Buelow tried threats, and drew awful pic-

tures of the consequences to Italy of a war with the Teutonic League; but on 20th March he informed Baron Sonnino that he had been authorized to guarantee in the name of Germany the execution of any agreement that might be concluded between Vienna and Rome. This touched the heart of the matter. Italy had insisted that the transference of any territories agreed upon must be made at once.\* Austria demurred, and Germany offered to back her bills. But Baron Sonnino very naturally asked what good the guarantee would be if the Teutonic

\* The concessions which Austria was willing to make were, according to the German Imperial Chancellor, as follows:—

1. The part of Tirol inhabited by Italians to be ceded to Italy.
2. Likewise the western bank of the Isonzo in so far as the population is purely Italian, and the town of Gradisca.
3. Trieste to be made an Imperial free city, receiving an administration insuring an Italian character to the city, and to have an Italian university.
4. The recognition of Italian sovereignty over Avlona and the sphere of interests belonging thereto.
5. Austria-Hungary declares her political disinterestedness regarding Albania.
6. The national interests of Italian nationals in Austria-Hungary to be particularly respected.
7. Austria-Hungary grants an amnesty for political or military criminals who are natives of the ceded territories.
8. The further wishes of Italy regarding general questions to be assured of every consideration.
9. Austria-Hungary, after the conclusion of the agreement, to give a solemn declaration concerning the concessions.
10. Mixed committees for the regulation of details of the concessions to be appointed.
11. After the conclusion of the agreement, Austro-Hungarian soldiers, natives of the occupied territories, shall not further participate in the war.

League was defeated. He might have added that, after recent experience of Germany's public honour, it would be no more than a scrap of paper in the event of her victory.

April was devoted by Austria and Germany to playing for time. The Chamber had been adjourned till 12th May, and Germany tried to intimidate Italy by spreading rumours of an impending separate peace between herself and Russia. Baron Sonnino replied by setting forth his demands in the shape of a draft treaty, under which the Trentino and several Dalmatian islands would have become Italy's, and the Istrian coast and Trieste would have been occupied by her, pending their constitution after the war as an autonomous state.

*April 16.* These proposals were declined by Vienna on 16th April. On 3rd May Baron Sonnino denounced the Triple Alliance, and it

*May 3.* was decreed that no member of the Government must for the present leave Rome.

Then came a political crisis. Some of Signor Giolitti's followers began an agitation for accepting the Austro-German terms, and the attitude of their leader was doubtful. It was possible that he might turn out the Government and become Premier with

*May 13.* an anti-war policy. On 13th May Signor Salandra placed his resignation in the King's hands, on the ground that his Ministry did not possess "that unanimous assent of the constitutional parties regarding its international policy which the gravity of the situation demands." The King refused to accept his resignation, and he returned to office. His action had cleared the air,

and it was now plain that Signor Giolitti did not intend to make himself responsible for a policy of neutrality.

On 20th May the Chamber, by 407 votes to 74, passed a bill conferring full powers on the Government in the event of war. *May 20.*

On the 22nd a general mobilization was ordered.

On the 23rd Italy declared war upon Austria. Baron von Macchio in Rome *May 22.*

was handed his passports, the Duke of Avarna was recalled from Vienna, and Prince Buelow ended his fruitless diplomacy. That *May 23.* day the first shots were fired by the frontier guards in the north.

The Italian Foreign Minister's brilliant handling of the negotiations had put Italy technically in the right. She went to war on grounds fully justified by the public law of Europe. But the discussions were in reality academic, for the dominating reasons lay elsewhere. Where would Italy have been had Germany triumphed? Supposing she had got the territory she had asked for, how long would she have kept it in face of a victorious Germany, which would regard these concessions as having been forced from her under duress? And if she had relied on Germany's bond, why should that have been deemed sacred by a Power whose international ethics were anarchy? These were the true grounds for war which lay behind all Italy's ingenious manœuvring for position.

She had amply vindicated herself in the eyes of the world. So far from coming to the succour of the victor,\* she had joined the Allies just when their

\* See Vol. III., p. 131.

prospects were darkening. As she marched to the Isonzo, von Mackensen was driving the Russians to the San ; and at Ypres, in the West, the British had suffered grievously. The Dardanelles expedition had not succeeded, and to the eyes of most men its prospects were cloudy. We cannot judge the temper of a nation by its formal diplomacy or by its parliamentary debates, and in Italy as war drew near there grew up a popular enthusiasm which had very little care for material rewards. The Irredentist tradition was less one of territorial enlargement than of racial liberation. The nation desired to wipe out the memories of Custozza and Lissa and of the darker days before, but they also fought in the cause of European liberty. It was such a crusade as Mazzini might have preached, that wise idealist who wrote : " War is a fact, and will be a fact for some time to come, and, though dreadful in itself, is very often the only way of helping Right against brutal Force." In the spirit of Garibaldi and his Thousand, Italy entered upon her latest war of liberation, as in the ancient days when the streets of her cities heard the war-cry : *Popolo : Popolo : muoiano i tiranni.*

## CHAPTER LII.

### THE ALLIED OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST.

The Situation at the Beginning of April—The German Preparations—The New German Plan—Germany's Reinforcements—The New "Divisions of Assault"—The New Allied Commands—The War in Alsace—Hartmannswillerkopf—The Struggle for Metzeral—The Campaign in the Woëvre—The St. Mihiel Wedge—The French capture the Les Eparges Heights—The Struggle along the Salient—Metz shelled—The Movement in the Artois—Its Aim and Cause—The German Front in the Artois—The Great Bombardment—Capture of the White Works at La Targette—Fall of Carency and Ablain—Capture of the Notre-Dame de Lorette Ridge—The German "Fortresses"—The New Character of the War—The British Attack from Fromelles—The British Attack from Festubert—The New Siege Warfare.

BY the beginning of April, as we have seen, the world was turning its eyes towards the Western front, awaiting the news of some great effort on the part of the Allies. The "nibbling" of the winter had given us points of high strategic importance. France had new armies waiting, and her munitions were known to have been vastly increased since the Battle of the Marne. Britain by her performance at Neuve Chapelle had shown that she had mastered the main secret of the present war, and a second and greater Neuve Chapelle was daily expected. We had had for eight

months in training at home more than a million men, and the first of these new armies must soon be on the sea. Already the balance of man-power in the West was in the Allies' favour ; soon it looked as if our numerical superiority would enable us to force the German front eastward to its own country. Meanwhile Russia was hanging on the fringe of Hungary, and threatening the road to Cracow.

The issue proved that Germany had judged more shrewdly than any of the Allied Staffs. No one of her three enemies was really ready or could be ready for months. France was the best prepared. She had in the field all the men immediately available, and had done wonders with her supplies. Britain was still backward. Her Government was only just beginning to realize that in its present phase it was a gunners' war, and especially a war of high explosives. She had left her industries unorganized, and was behindhand in the most vital matters—machine guns and high-explosive shells. Moreover, her splendid new armies were unaccountably slow in getting ready, probably because of some shortage in equipment. Russia was the most unready of all. At the best a nation of few industries, she had not taken full advantage of what she had. She had trusted too much to buying supplies abroad, where she competed with her Allies, and had much trouble in taking delivery of her purchases. She had brilliant leaders and large, gallant, and well-trained armies, but she had not the weapons for them.

Germany alone was fully awake to the precise character of the war. All through the winter, when we in Britain were speculating how long her stores



of food and explosives would last, she had been busy preparing her armoury. She found substitutes for ingredients which she had formerly imported, and the whole of the talent of her brilliant chemists was mobilized for the purpose. All the human strength of the nation, which was not in the field, was employed directly or indirectly to make munitions. Women and girls and old men took their places in the armament factories. The quantity of shells which she produced is beyond reckoning. When we remember that she supplied 900 miles of front (with some assistance from Austria) in the East, more than 500 miles in the West, and equipped Turkey for the Dardanelles campaign, and that her use of shells was five or six times more lavish than that of her opponents, we may get some notion of the magnitude of the national effort. It was more impressive in its way than the muster of her great armies in August.

She had created a machine with which she believed she could destroy one enemy and in the meantime keep the other at a distance. Her losses had been immense—a dead loss, perhaps, of little less than three millions by the beginning of April. She saw clearly what the wiser observers in the West had for some time been suggesting—that if she were conquered it would be because of a shortage, not of food or munitions, but of soldiers. She was tied to a military theory which demanded an extravagant sacrifice of men; but apart from that she was saving of life. She believed that her machine could keep the enemy at long range on the West till such time as she could turn and deal with him. She had no illusions about the Allied

offensive, or, if she had, it was in the direction of under-estimating it. She knew, or thought she knew, that no weight of men could break her front till the Allies had got a machine as strong as her own. She therefore disregarded the West, and swung the bulk of her new strength and the chief weight of her artillery against Russia—the unreadiest of her foes—leaving in France and Flanders only sufficient weight of men and guns to hold the line in a long-range contest.

It was a bold decision, for she took many risks. But its boldness must not be exaggerated. Her force in the West was at least half her total, still not less than two millions, and though it was numerically smaller than the Allied<sup>n</sup> armies it was better equipped with artillery and far better provided with shells. She adopted a novel policy in her handling of her fresh levies. The new formations which she had begun to create in October—the *Hilfscorps*, composed of Landwehr, Landsturm, and volunteers of all ages unstiffened by first-line troops—had been little of a success. Their first onslaught was terrible, as we found at Ypres, but they did not last. The fresh units which she now formed took the shape of divisions, each made up of three infantry regiments, several artillery regiments, and divisional troops. The infantry required were taken intact from the old first-line corps and the reserve corps formed on mobilization. These new divisions were, therefore, the pick of the German forces, and of those which we can trace at least six were used in the West. Three were assigned to von Buelow just opposite Arras, and another three were employed in the Woëvre. They

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were strictly "divisions of assault," a spearhead to be used wherever the chief danger threatened.

The gaps thus created in the old first-line corps were filled up with new levies of the same type as the *Hilfscorps*—raw volunteers and middle-aged men. We must remember that, when we speak of some famous corps like the 7th or the 15th being in action, it was no longer the corps which fought in the August battles. A considerable part of it was made up of very indifferent material. The present writer, after the first British attack from Festubert, saw several hundred prisoners belonging to the 57th Regiment of the 7th (Westphalian) Corps, the corps which had at one time been the *élite* of von Kluck's army. They were weedy, ill-grown youths and flabby, elderly men. If one talked with captured German officers one heard bitter complaints of the quality of the new recruits.

But Germany was not yet at the end of her best material. To fill up the gaps, she had still a certain number of Ersatz reserves not yet incorporated, who made respectable fighting men, and she had the new levies coming forward from the 1915 and 1916 classes. The latter—her last line in the strictest sense—were destined for her great movement in the East. They were part of the new striking force with whom, along with her artillery, she still hoped to effect that complete *débâcle* of the Allies, which would compel them to call the campaign a draw, and accept a peace on her own terms.

There was one joint in Germany's armour too little appreciated at the time. She had lost terribly in her officer class—considerably more than

half her effectives ; and since that class was also a caste, it was difficult to fill the gaps without a violent breach in her whole service tradition. But the gaps must be filled, and accordingly there appeared a new type of officer, created, so to speak, for the war only, an officer on probation, and with limited privileges. Now the German officer had his drawbacks, but for the purposes of the German theory of war he was highly efficient. His vigour, his ruthlessness, his mechanical perfection, his professional zeal, were all invaluable. The new type might be a better and abler man, but he did not fit in so well with the machine, and where the machine is everything no part of it can safely be out of gear.

The Allied offensive came, and the depleted German front was ready for it. Germany had calculated rightly. Blows which six months before would have driven in the line and compelled a retirement were now fruitless because of the mass of artillery behind the defence. Germany, knowing the superiority of the Allied infantry, struggled to keep them at arm's length, and for a time succeeded. Her very weakness was part of her strength, for a blow which will shatter a steel rod may sink harmlessly into india-rubber. As we shall see, strange things happened on the German front. What was virtually a broken line managed to check the Allied advance by the very fact that it was no longer cohesive. In place of a serried front, there were a number of separate fortresses which had to be reduced one by one. Germany was playing for time, and she played the game with extraordinary skill. It was her business in the West to hold the

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Allies at all costs till the hammer of von Mackensen had shattered the Russian panoply.

The Allied armies, as we have seen, had been divided into two groups—that under Dubail, ranging from Belfort to Compiègne, and that under Foch from Compiègne to the North Sea. This was changed now to a tripartite division, North, Central, and East, with de Castelnau in charge of the central *secteur*. De Castelnau's place at the head of the 7th Army was taken by General Petain. Some important changes had also been made in the commands. General Putz, who had commanded the 1st Army in the Vosges, took over what had been d'Urbal's 8th Army from Ypres to Nieuport. D'Urbal succeeded Maud'huy in command of the 10th Army, holding the vital section of the Artois. Maud'huy, a former Chasseur, went south to the Army of the Vosges, where he would be with his old regiments. Let us look first at the movements of Dubail.

The months of April and May saw little progress in Alsace. The campaign in the plains had become a matter of trench warfare, and the chief incident of these months was the struggle for Hartmannsweilerkopf, that spur of the Molkenrain *massif* which dominates the junction of the Ill and the Thur. The summit of this hill had been won by the Germans on 21st January, but the French held the higher ground to the west and the western slopes. On 25th March a grand assault was made by the French artillery, which was continued during the following day. On the 26th the Chasseurs, after six hours' des-

perate fighting, succeeded in carrying the top, and took more than 400 German prisoners. They were not allowed to remain in quiet possession. The place was too vital for the control of the Ill valley, and for the next few weeks we saw a constant succession of counter-attacks. April was ushered in with snow-storms, and the struggle on the tangled slopes was conducted under winter conditions. It was the aim of the French to clear the enemy off the eastern side, and of the enemy to retake the summit. It would appear that during these days the summit was lost on at least one occasion, for we heard of the recapture of it by the French on

*April 28.* 28th April. In May we had many contradictory accounts, both French and German *communiqués* claiming successes. The explanation seems to be that each side controlled part of the hill, and claimed that they held the vital part. The French had all the west and the actual top, the Germans the east and north-east and part of the summit ridge. Till the whole mountain was clear of the enemy the French could not be said to occupy it so as to use it as a vantage point against the communications of the Ill valley.

The other section of the Vosges fighting was concerned with the valley of the Fecht, which flows east from the Schlucht and Bramont passes past Metzeral and Munster. The railway from Colmar runs up its right bank to the terminus at Metzeral. The Chasseurs Alpins held the heights in the upper reaches of the Fecht valley, and their aim was the two towns. During April they made considerable progress on both banks of the Fecht. They won the spur overlooking Metzeral from the north-west,

and on 17th April they carried the ridge between the two valleys which unite at Metzeral. *April 17.* This converging attack was pushed on by slow degrees during May. The capture of the towns of the Upper Fecht would bring them within sight of Colmar and the lateral railway which served the German front in the Alsatian plains.

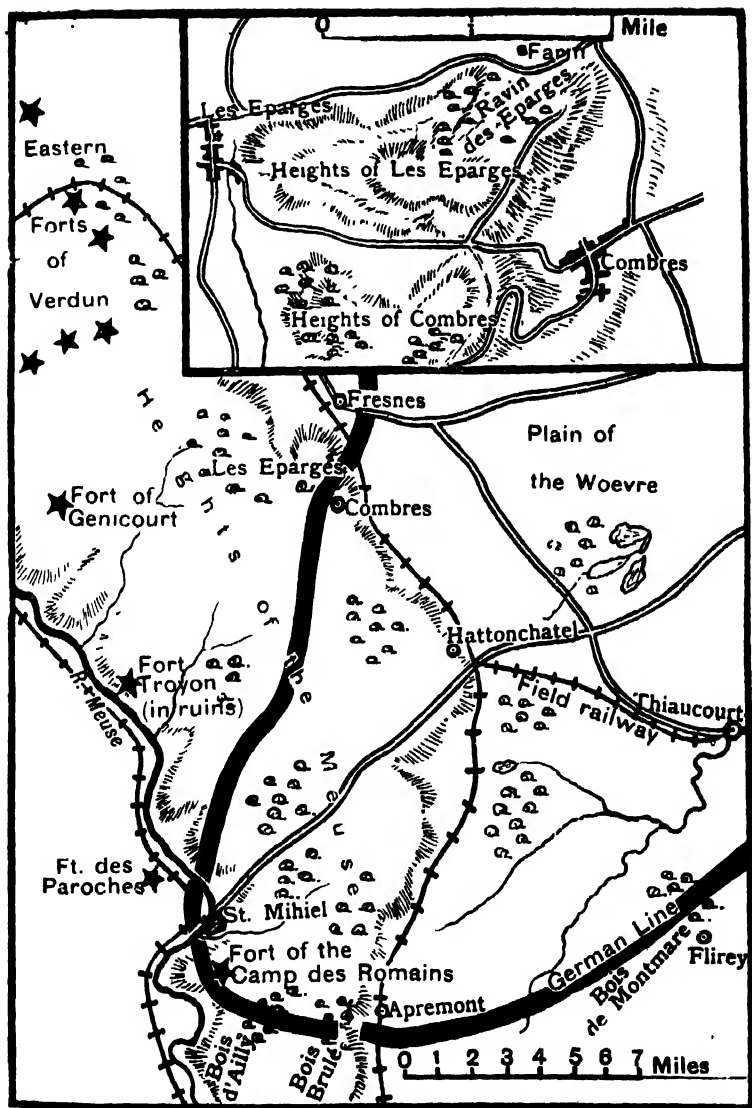
Going north, the next theatre of active operations was the wooded plateau between the Meuse and the Moselle, where ran the long thin German wedge, with its apex across the Meuse at St. Mihiel. That apex was strongly held by the position at the Camp des Romains, the guns of which commanded the country for ten miles round. The communications of this salient were curious. On the north was the railway running from Metz by Conflans to Etain. Twenty miles south another line ran from Metz to Thiaucourt along the narrow Rupt de Mad. About the centre of the narrows of the salient lay the village of Vigneulles, on the only practicable road to St. Mihiel, the better road to the south by Apremont being controlled by the French. From Thiaucourt a strategic railway had been constructed by Vigneulles to St. Mihiel down the Gap of Spada, a natural opening through the hills of the Meuse valley. North of Vigneulles lay the plateau of Les Eparges, about a thousand feet above the sea, forming the eastern rim of the Heights of the Meuse. The southern side of the salient was high ground, along which ran the main road from Pont-à-Mousson to Commercy. The interior was the rough, woody country of the Woëvre, the inside of a saucer of which Les Eparges and the Apremont-Pont-à-Mousson heights were the rim.

The aim of the French was not to attack the wedge at its point, where the guns of the Camp des Romains made a strong defence possible, but to squeeze it thin by pressing in the sides, and ultimately dominating the communications of the St. Mihiel apex. At the beginning of April the north-western side of the German salient ran from Etain in the north by Fresnes, across the Les Eparges heights, then by Lamorville and Spada to St. Mihiel. The south-eastern side ran from St. Mihiel by the Camp des Romains, the Bois d'Ailly, Apremont, Boudonville, Regniéville, to the Moselle, three miles north of Pont-à-Mousson. Obviously the important point was the Les Eparges plateau, which commanded much of the northern interior of the salient, and the possession of which was the preliminary to an attack upon the vital position of Vigneulles.

The Germans had seized Les Eparges on 21st September, and had made of it an apparently impregnable fortress. Its steep slopes were lined with trenches, and the hill had been honeycombed with shelters and dug-outs. The operations during February and March had given the French the village of Les Eparges and part of the north-western slopes, but they were still a long way from the crest, and their advance was terribly exposed, since every movement was obvious to the enemy on the upper ground. The great attack on the position began

*April 5.* on 5th April, about four o'clock in the afternoon. It was raining heavily, and the whole hillside was one mass of mud seamed by the channels of swollen springs. A considerable piece of ground was won, but when the Germans counter-attacked early next morning the French





Map showing the French Attacks on the St. Mihiel Wedge, with Inset Sketch of the Les Eparges Position.

were unable to maintain their positions. That

*April 6.* evening, 6th April, a second attempt began, and the French left and right made good progress. All night in the driving rain the struggle continued, the attackers winning the ground foot by foot with the bayonet. By the

*April 7.* morning of the 7th they had captured 1,500 yards of trenches, and were nearing the summit.

That morning the Germans brought up strong reinforcements, and made a desperate effort to regain what they had lost. But the French artillery, brilliantly handled, caught the supports as they were massing, and kept them off. The German guns did the same thing by the French reserves, and nothing was done during the rest of the day. On the morn-

*April 8.* ing of the 8th two regiments of French infantry and a Chasseur battalion made a bid for the summit, and won it after an hour's struggle. The Germans fell back to the eastern side. All that day the battle continued, and after thirteen hours' fighting the whole position was in French hands, except a small triangle at the extreme east.

On the morning of the 9th the weary troops on the crest were relieved by a fresh regiment, which

*April 9.* had taken no less than fourteen hours to come up, so difficult was the ground, and so violent the weather. That afternoon at three the final attack began, and the eastern triangle was cleared. Then came a sudden fog which made artillery useless, and under cover of it the Germans counter-attacked. For a moment the French fell back, but only for a moment. The fog lifted, the

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guns came again into action, the fresh regiment charged with the bayonet, and at 10 p.m. the great spur which dominates the Woëvre was in the Allies' hands.

The winning of the height of Les Eparges in these five days of tempest was a wonderful feat of arms. The Germans were well aware of the value of the position, and fought desperately in its defence. Their troops were no longer the 33rd Reserve Division which had held the ground in March, but the first-line 10th Division of the 5th (Posen) Corps. The French had to advance over open ground up slopes where men could scarcely find a foothold in the slime, and against trenches and bastions prepared at leisure through the winter. Many a soldier was drowned in mud. An unceasing hail of projectiles was rained on the advance, and the endless machine guns of the enemy from carefully-chosen points made the hillside a death-trap. So determined were the Germans to hold the heights that in many cases the machine-gun men had been chained to their weapons. The enemy still held the lesser spur of Combres, but it was little use to them, for any advance from it was caught between French fire from Les Eparges and St. Remy.

The capture of Les Eparges was the main feat of this section of the campaign. But the attack was kept up on the wedge at other points. The French advanced to Etain in the north, capturing the low hills on the right bank of the Orne, and thereby restricting the German use of the Etain-Conflans railway. They pressed in upon Gussainville, the northern re-entrant of the salient; upon Lamor-

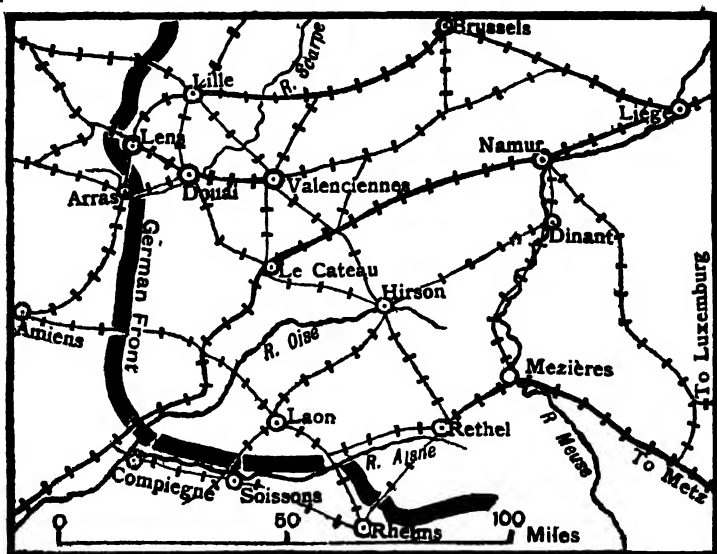
ville, which controlled the Gap of Spada, and upon the Bois de la Selouse to the north of it. Especially on the southern side of the salient was the fighting severe. The French held the upper crest, from which the land slopes towards the Rupt de Mad. It is a country of thick, scrubby woods, which towards the Moselle valley in the east grow into considerable forests. The German trenches were well placed, and took advantage of the admirable cover formed by the inequalities of the ground. The main portion of the French advance was in the Bois d'Ailly, under the Camp des Romains, in the Forest of Apremont, in the Bois de Mont-Mare, at the village of Regniéville, and in the Bois le Prêtre, on the banks of the Moselle. The gains look small even on the largest scale map, but cumulatively they amounted to a considerable pressing in of the southern side of the salient. The French were little more than four miles from Thiaucourt, which lay in the hollow below them, and to the north the possession of Les Eparges, threatening Vigneulles, and the movement against the Gap of Spada, jeopardized the whole position at St. Mihiel. A little farther, and it looked as if the wedge must be squeezed so thin that it must cease to be, and the lines of von Strantz's armies fall back to those uplands west of Metz which contained the battlefields of Mars la Tour and Gravelotte.

By this time the French were within gun range of Metz. On 1st May, as a reprisal for the shelling of Dunkirk by the German naval gun  
*May 1.* at Dixmude, the French heavy artillery at Pont-à-Mousson threw shells inside the southern front of the Metz entrenchments. The successes

in the Woëvre were generally believed to be the first step in a great movement of the armies of Nancy and the Vosges, which, based on the frontier fortresses, would move into Lorraine and Alsace, and strike a deadly blow against the German left. It is not improbable that this was the view at one time of the French Staff. The soldiers of France were eager to meet the enemy on that very ground where, forty-five years before, Bazaine and Mac-Mahon had led them to defeat. Moreover, to outside observers, it seemed as if the southern front offered the best chance for that manœuvre battle which was impossible in the congested north.

If such a policy was ever entertained, it was abandoned by the beginning of May. The reason is not far to seek. The seriousness of the movement against Russia had by that time revealed itself. Something must be done to relieve the fierce pressure upon our Eastern Allies, and it must be attempted in the theatre which promised the speediest results. A movement upon Lorraine and Alsace, however successful, would be slow. It would be masked by great fortresses, and it would not strike at any vital communications. At the best it would threaten the hill country of Baden and Wurtemberg, an area far removed from the heart of Germany. It was incumbent upon General Joffre to develop a strategy which would distract the enemy from the Eastern front by putting some vital interest in jeopardy. One section was marked out above all others for such a venture. If the 10th Army in the Artois could advance over the plain of the Scheldt towards Douai and Valenciennes, the communications of the whole of the German front

from Lille to Soissons would be in instant peril, and a wholesale retreat would be imperative. Elsewhere a blow might be struck at the local communications of one army, but here a blow was possible against the lines of supply of three armies. The history of the Allied offensive in May



Sketch showing importance of Douai and Valenciennes Junctions in the German Railway Communications on the Western Front.

is, therefore, the history of the thrust of the French towards Lens and of the British towards Lille. The centre of interest passes from the armies of Dubail to the armies of Foch.

To follow the complicated fighting in the Artois we must note with some care the nature of the country between Arras and La Bassée. The downs

which bound on the south the valley of the Scarpe are continued on the north by a low tableland which falls in long ridges to the valley of the Lys and the flat country around Lens. This chalky plateau is full of hollows, most of which have their little towns. Its highest part is what we know as the ridge of Notre-Dame de Lorette, which runs west and east, and is scored by many ravines. In the glen south of it lies the town of Ablain St. Nazaire, and across the next ridge the town of Carency. Then comes a broad hollow, with the Bois de Berthonval in the centre, till the ground rises again at Mont St. Eloi. North of the Lorette ridge is the plain of the Lys. East of it the ground slopes in spurs of an easy gradient to the trough where runs the main road from Bethune to Arras, with the towns of Souchez and La Targette on the wayside. Farther east it rises again to the low heights of Vimy, beyond which runs the Arras-Lens road. The country is in type like an outlying part of the Santerre—hedgeless fields cut by many white roads, with endless possibilities of defence in the ravines and villages. The Lorette ridge is a bare scarp, but its sides are patched with coppices which cluster thickly in the gullies.

At the beginning of May the German lines in this part formed a sharp salient. They extended from east of Loos, across the Lens-Bethune road, east of Aix-Noulette, and reached the Lorette plateau well to the west of its highest spur, where stood the Chapel of Our Lady. They covered Ablain, which was the extreme point of the salient, and Carency. They then curved sharply back east of the Bois de Berthonval, covering La Targette and the Bethune-Arras road. This last section of their

front was known by the French as the White Works, because of the colour of the parapets cut from the chalk. The village of Ecurie was inside their line, which thereafter fell back to the east of Arras.

The meaning of this salient was the protection of Lens, which was the key of the upper plain of the Scheldt, and all the flat country towards Douai and Valenciennes. Once they were driven off the high ground, their hold on Lens would be endangered, and the railway which ran behind this front would be useless. During the early months of the year the French had been nibbling at the positions on the Lorette plateau, and had won considerable ground. During the first week of May d'Urbal's 10th Army in the Artois received additions which increased it to seven corps. A huge weight of artillery was concentrated, not less than 1,100 guns of different types, and General Foch, the commander of the army group, took personal charge of the operations. The Germans seem to have been aware that some danger threatened, for they brought up three of their new "divisions of assault." We cannot state with exactness the nature of von Buelow's command at the moment. From prisoners' tales it would appear to have consisted chiefly of troops from Saxony, Baden, and Bavaria. It was certainly outnumbered by the French, and probably outgunned; but it had the advantage of holding one of the strongest positions on either the Western or Eastern front. We may describe its line as consisting of a number of almost impregnable fortresses, manned by machine guns, and linked together by an intricate system of trenches. Between Ablain and Lens there must have been at least



five series of trench lines prepared, each with its *fortins*, which would enfilade an enemy advance.

On Sunday, 9th May, in clear weather, the French began their artillery preparation, in the section between La Targette and Ca-  
May 9.  
 rency. That bombardment was the most wonderful yet seen in Western Europe, and may be compared with the attack which von Mackensen was at the same time conducting in Galicia. It simply ate up the countryside for miles. Parapets and entanglements were blown to pieces, and all that remained was a ploughed land and fragments of wire and humanity. For hours the great guns spoke with the rapidity of maxims, and more than 300,000 shells were fired in the course of the day. About ten in the morning the infantry were let loose. On the right they took what remained of La Targette, and with it the vital cross-roads. East of it, in the hollow below the Vimy heights, lies the village of Neuville St. Vaast, with its big church. By noon the French had taken the west of it, and by three o'clock they were attacking the church. The whole place bristled with machine guns, and the battle was waged from house to house and from cellar to cellar. Farther north, the centre moved from the trenches in the Bois de Berthonval, and swept like a flood over what had once been the White Works. They poured on beyond the Arras-Bethune road, and in an hour and a half had won more than two and a half miles—the most conspicuous advance made in the West since the war of trenches began. Like Jeb Stuart's troopers in Virginia, they plucked sprigs of lilac and hawthorn and stuck them in their caps as they surged on-

wards. Had the whole line been able to conform to the pace of the centre, Lens would have fallen in a day.

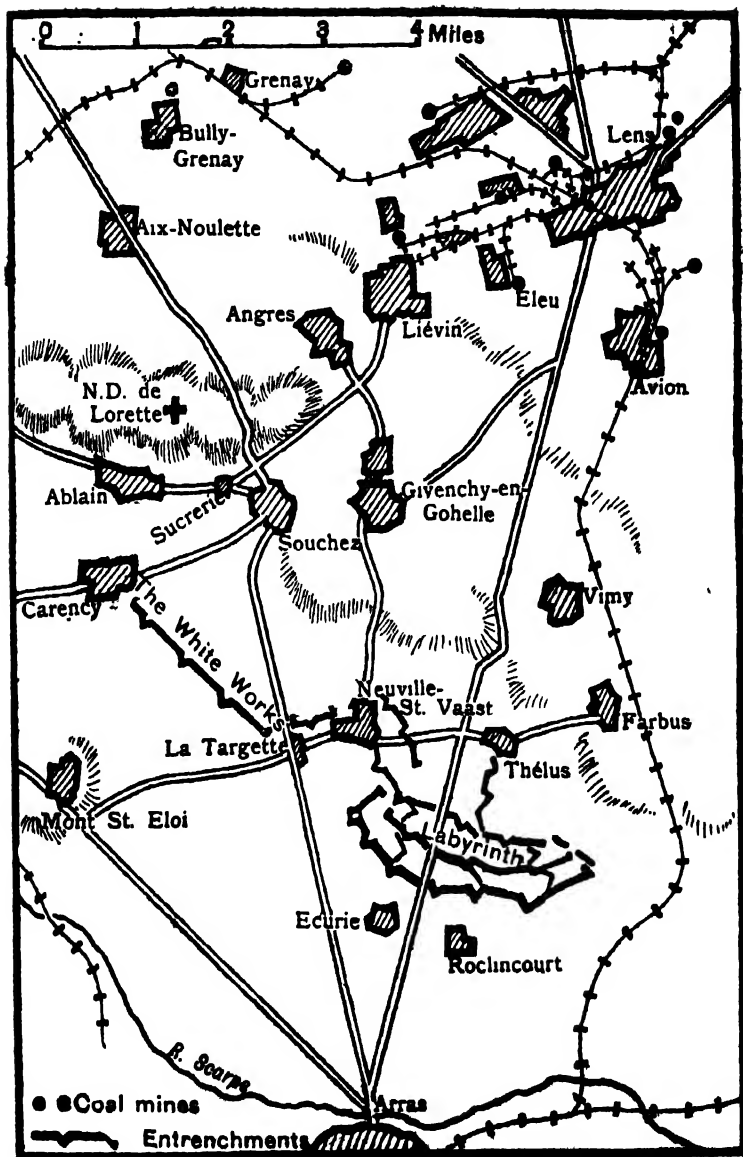
Meanwhile the French left was battling hard for Carency. Here progress was slower, owing to the endless ravines and nooks of hill. The first movement carried them into the outskirts of the village, whence they pushed east, and cut the road from Carency to Souchez. The siege of Carency had begun, for the only communication of the German garrison was now with Ablain and the north. When darkness fell the French had, on a front of five miles, carried three German trench lines, and had taken 3,000 prisoners, ten field guns, and fifty machine guns.

Next day, the 10th, the battle began again farther north. After a hard fight the French car-

*May 10.* ried all the German entrenchments across the Loos-Bethune road. Farther south they attacked the fortified chapel of Notre-Dame de Lorette, and captured the trenches south of it, which connected with Ablain and Souchez. On the right they took the cemetery of Neuville St. Vaast, and repulsed the German reserves which came up in motor cars from Lens and Douai. All this was preparatory to the great assault of the following day. That day, the 11th, saw the

*May 11.* beginning of the end of Carency. The ruins of the town, into which 20,000 shells had fallen, were surrounded on west, south, and east. It was slow and desperate work, for the Germans had turned every available place into a *fortin*, and

*May 12.* each had to be separately carried. On Wednesday, the 12th, about 5.30 in the afternoon, the German remnants in Carency sur-



The French Offensive between Arras and Lens.

rendered, raising the total of prisoners in French hands to over 5,000. That same day the summit of Notre-Dame de Lorette fell, with its fort and chapel, and, late in the afternoon, Ablain, now in flames, followed suit, though one or two strongholds still held out. The whole of the high ground west of Souchez was now in French hands, with the exception of a few German *fortins* on its eastern ridges.

What the fighting meant, both in attack and counter-attack, may be seen from the account of a French officer who was engaged in the assault on Notre-Dame de Lorette :—

“ Enormous shells pounded us—dead and living—without interruption. We who had survived could scarcely breathe for the thick nauseating smoke ; the earth shook ; the air was alive with the scream of the missiles. The reinforcements which had been sent melted away like snow under a burning sun, and I applied incessantly for more. Heroes all they were ; I gripped them by the hand when they came, and was honoured indeed to have such men under my command.

“ There was no opportunity of getting provisions to us, and we passed twenty-four hours without food. For five days we remained in our positions. My Colonel, so they tell me, remarked to his orderly, ‘ How can a company hold that hell ? It’s impossible ! ’ It wasn’t, as you know ; but the experiences of those who were in it are indescribable. Day and night, every hour, nay, every minute, on hands and feet we crawled over nameless heaps which a little before had been living men. Solemn thoughts filled the most sceptical of minds. And still we held on. There was one moment when a great shell fell and burst only eight feet away from myself and five men. We were engulfed and buried in the upheaval of earth ; but, wonderful to say, not one was wounded. When we had extricated ourselves from what might very well have been our graves, we knelt with bared heads and gave thanks to Our Lady of Loretto for our safety.

“ It was not long after this that we were relieved. I came

## ALLIED OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST. 97

down from that plateau with my handful of men—all that was left of two companies—like the rest, dead with fatigue. Our eyes saw little, our lips were drawn, our teeth chattered involuntarily, our clothes were in rags, our bodies covered with dirt and blood. We were frightful to look at, but Notre-Dame de Lorette was ours."

On Thursday, 13th May, the weather changed to a north wind and drenching rain. The French attack was now mainly directed to Souchez, Angres, and Neuville St. Vaast. *May 13.*

The situation was peculiar. Technically the German line had been broken. In the direction of the Vimy heights all the trenches had been carried, and the way seemed open for a passage. What had happened was that instead of bending back when attacked and maintaining its cohesion, the German front had become a series of isolated forts, like drops of mercury spilled on a table. The most notable of these were the sugar refinery at Souchez, the cemetery at Ablain, the White Road on one of the Lorette spurs, the eastern part of Neuville St. Vaast, and especially the place called the Labyrinth, between Neuville and Ecurie, where the Germans had constructed an extraordinary network of trenches and redoubts in the angle between two roads. These *fortins* were manned by numerous machine guns, in some cases worked only by officers. They were so placed that it was difficult for long-range fire to destroy them, and until they were cleared out any advance was enfiladed. The battle, therefore, resolved itself into a series of isolated actions against forts. *May 21-*

On 21st May the White Road was taken, *31.*  
on 29th May the Ablain position fell, on the 31st

the Souchez refinery was captured, though it changed hands several times before it finally fell to the French. Eight days later Neuville St. Vaast was wholly in their hands. But as one *fortin* fell another revealed itself. The Labyrinth especially was a difficult business where the fighting was desperate and continuous, and a day's progress had to be reckoned in feet. There the German burrows were sometimes fifty feet deep, and the struggle went on in underground galleries by the light of electric torches and flares—a miners' warfare like Marlborough's siege of Tournai.

At the close of May the first stage of what we may call the Battle of the Artois had been a brilliant though not decisive success for French arms. What the losses of the Germans were up to that date we can only guess, but in the month's fighting they can scarcely have been less than 60,000, and may well have been more. The French suffered severely in the later hand-to-hand fighting, but their great advance was made at little cost. One division killed 2,600 of the enemy and took 3,000 prisoners, while their own loss was only 250 killed and 1,250 wounded. The German salient had gone, the line was straightened, and all but the last defences of Lens had fallen. The achievement was a triumph for the fighting quality of the French infantry, and especially for the French artillery. Here at last was an adequate artillery preparation, which did not stop till it had flattened and sterilized the whole landscape before it. In these days we began to realize how formidable a weapon Germany had created in her vast accumulation of shells. The machine, till it was mastered by a like creation,

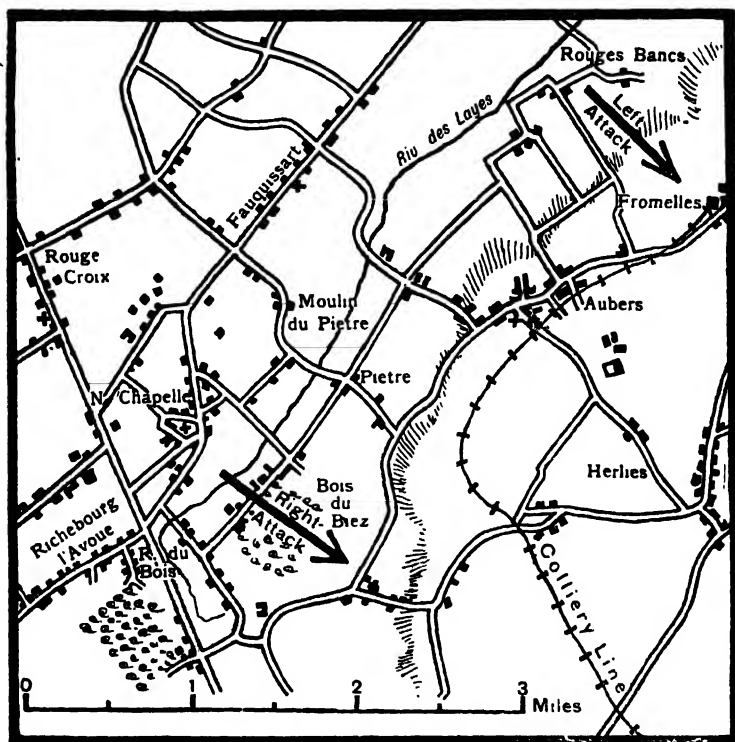
## ALLIED OFFENSIVE IN THE WEST. 99

must nullify the valour and discipline of the finest soldiers in the world.

The British advance in May in the Festubert region was intended mainly as an auxiliary to the French effort in the Artois. It was designed in the first place to detain the German 7th Corps in position, and to prevent reinforcements in men and guns being sent south to Lens. But it had also a positive if subsidiary purpose. If successful, it would win the Aubers ridge, for the sake of which we had fought Neuve Chapelle, and so threaten Lille and La Bassée, and if the French got to Lens we should be in a position to conform effectively to their advance.

The first movement took place on the morning of Sunday, 9th May, and the section selected was that between Festubert and Bois Grenier. On the right, part of the First *May 9.* Corps and the Indian Corps advanced from the Rue du Bois in the direction of that old battleground, the southern end of the Bois du Biez. But the main attack was delivered by the 8th Division, from Rouges Bancs, on the upper course of the river des Layes, towards Fromelles and the northern part of the Aubers ridge. The artillery preparation which preceded it was inadequate, and our men came up against unbroken wire and parapets. Some ground was won, but most of our gains could not be held, and by the evening we had made little progress. That day was the occasion for many acts of signal heroism. On our right, at Rue du Bois, Corporal John Ripley and Lance-Corporal David Finlay of the Black Watch received the Vic-

toria Cross for their gallantry in attack. In the Fromelles section the 24th and 25th Brigades especially distinguished themselves. Two Victoria Crosses were won—by Corporal Charles Sharpe of the 2nd Lincolns for his brilliant work with bombs,



The Advance against the Aubers Ridge, May 9th.

and by Corporal James Upton of the 2nd Sherwood Foresters for his heroic services in bringing in the wounded. A Territorial Battalion, the 13th (Kensington) of the London Regiment, on the extreme left, performed, according to the general command-



ing the Fourth Corps, "a feat of arms surpassed by no battalion in the great war." They carried three lines of German trenches with the bayonet, and held them till the German fire made them untenable, when they fell back with four company officers left. The desperate nature of the fighting may be realized from the following quotation from the letter of one of the few survivors :—

"The minute our bombardment ceased we were over our parapet, and, charging right through, captured the first, second, and third lines of German trenches on our front at the point of the bayonet. We swept straight through while two companies, turning right and left, bayoneted and bombed the Huns back along their trenches for a couple of hundred yards on either side.

"Then we settled down to hold on to what we had taken against steadily increasing German counter-attacks. . . . But our right was floating in the air. We stuck it grimly for eight hours or more—until half-past two on that Sunday afternoon. My God, it was a Sunday I should like to forget. Their guns and ours kept a continuous deafening bombardment the whole day. Shells were pitching everywhere and anywhere. We had a nasty enfilade fire from machine guns we could not locate, and from snipers. We got a message in the front trench from the Brigadier, 'You have done splendidly, the — are coming up to reinforce you.' That was about 11.15, and I remember thinking of you people in England in church or strolling round the country lanes.

"Well, we held on with men getting hit in quite an unhealthy way. We held on—we saw our reinforcements come out, we saw them fade away. We found the Germans coming up in force on our flanks. Then we got the order to retire. There was nothing else to do, and it was bitter and damnable.

"Moreover, we had to fight our way through the German lines again in order to regain our men. I can't go into details of the hellish afternoon, for hours above our waists in the mud and foul crawling water of the German communication trenches, isolated and cut off by an enemy we could not see, but who was steadily reducing our numbers by very excellent

sniping. We were four subalterns in command of thirty to forty men. Two of the officers were killed. The other man and myself determined to wait until darkness and then try and get through the German lines to our own. It was a risk, but everything was a risk that day.

"To cut a long (and in reality too thrilling to be enjoyable) story short, we made the venture and we got through back into our trenches about a quarter-past eight. Incidentally, I found that I was reported killed. How and why I got through without being hit I shall never know. In advancing under cross fire men on either side of me—within hand's reach of me—were killed. At one point I had halted my men for a breather (it was in the first charge of the morning, after taking the first and before reaching the second German trench). The two men on each side of me (I could have touched any of the four) went in succession. A bullet struck the ground between my forehead and the ground (I was lying as flat as possible), but it only covered my face and head with dust. When I took up the first reinforcements to our front line we had to cross a field of a hundred yards of flat, bare ground, with scarcely a blade of grass and with a machine gun sweeping the place and a sniper doing very pretty shooting—too pretty for my liking though; a corporal and myself were the only ones of the party who got across without being hit.

"Our hottest time I think, though, was the final scramble back over this ground to the British trench in the evening. About 120-150 yards through German barbed wire and across ground raked by a withering cross-fire. It was a hailstorm of lead, bullets splitting up the ground and filling the air with the buzz of angry bees and bursting shells. For one hellish moment I was caught in the barbed wire, but managed somehow to wrench myself free, my nose almost burrowing the ground. Men were being hit all about me. Somehow, I shall never know how or why, I got across the foot of our parapet. There was a slight ridge there; lying absolutely flat, it gave cover. It was still light—about 7.45—and I told the men about to wait until it was darker before the last dash over the sandbags into our lines.

"Believe or disbelieve the following, but it is a fact, and it surprised no one more than myself. Lying there flat under the slightest ridge of earth, with shells bursting and whistling overhead, with bullets throwing up earth behind and before

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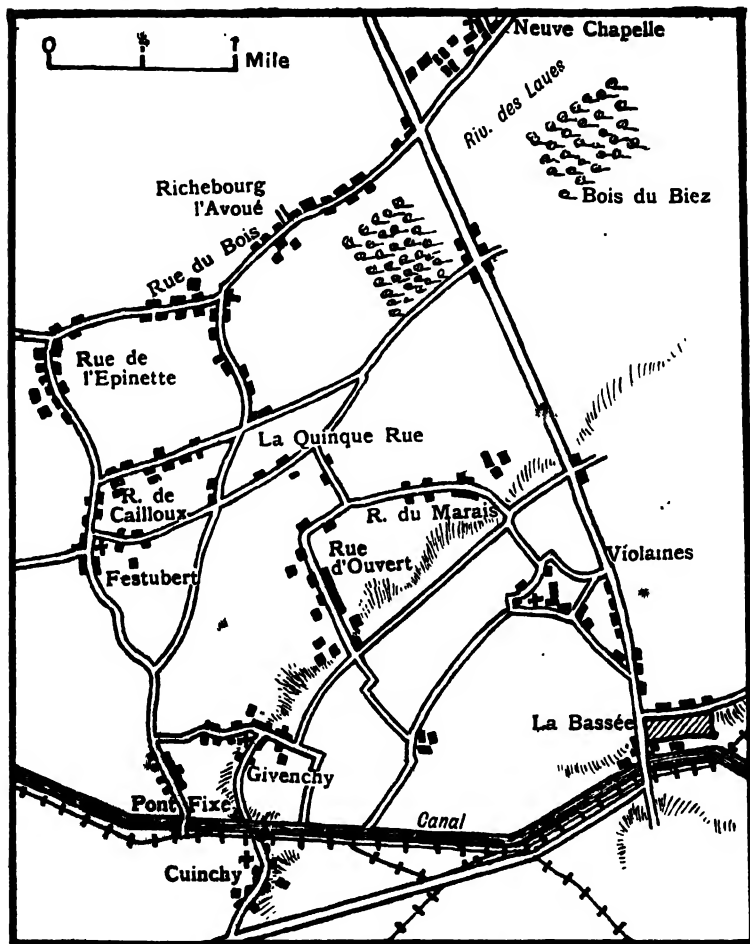
and around one, and going ' phlat ' against the parapet which was my desired haven twenty yards away—lying there I fell fast asleep from sheer exhaustion. It must have been nearly half an hour when I woke. I made the dash, scrambled up the parapet, and flung myself over and down among our own men. I never said ' Thank God ' as I said it then."\*

The next advance was on the morning of Sunday, 16th May, and the ground chosen was that immediately east of Festubert, where the German front showed a pronounced salient. The Battle of Festubert, as it may well be called, would in other wars, looking at the casualties and the numbers engaged, have been a major action, but in this campaign is ranked only as an episode—one link in the long-drawn chain of the Allied attack. Our artillery preparation began late on the Saturday night, assisted by three groups of French 75-mm. guns, and just after dawn the infantry advanced. The movement was entrusted to two brigades of the 7th Division, and part of the 2nd Division and the Indian Corps. The latter attacked on the left near Richebourg l'Avoué; the 20th Brigade moved from the Rue du Bois south-eastward; while the 22nd Brigade on the right advanced to the south-east of Festubert against the Rue d'Ouvert.

The left of the movement was held up by a tangle of fortified farms. The 2nd Division captured two lines of trenches, but the Indian Corps found progress impossible. The centre, advancing from the Rue du Bois, reached the Rue de Cailloux, and progressed some distance beyond till it was checked by a severe flanking fire. Reinforcements

\* Quoted by permission of the *Times*.

enabled it to proceed, and it reached a point to the north-west of La Quinque Rue. Brilliant work was



Scene of the Battle of Festubert.

done by the bombers of the 1st Grenadiers, for in these networks of trenches the old eighteenth-cen-

tury weapon was the most efficient we possessed for close-quarters fighting. One company of the 2nd Scots Guards got too far ahead and were cut off. The remnants of two Canadian battalions, it will be remembered, remained in St. Julien at the Second Battle of Ypres, and of the same kind was this stand of the Scots Guards. When, some days later, we took the ground, we found the Guards lying on the field of honour with swathes of the enemy's dead around them.

The most successful movement was that of our right, the 22nd Brigade, under General Lawford. The 2nd Queens, the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers, and the 1st South Staffords, with the 2nd Warwicks, and the 8th Royal Scots (Territorial) in support, advanced for more than a mile. The German trenches at this point were curiously complicated, and we reached what was their main communication trench near the Rue d'Ouvert. The country was dead flat and seamed with watercourses, and it was not easy to find the points indicated by our air reconnaissance. The enemy attempted to make a barrage of fire behind us, so that it was a perilous business to get up reserves of men and ammunition. The supports in the rear had to sit still during hours of shelling—the most difficult of duties in war. This kind of work puts a premium upon individual gallantry, and that day showed a conspicuous example. Company Sergeant-Major Barter of the 1st Welsh Fusiliers, when his battalion reached the first line of German trenches, called for volunteers. With the eight men who responded, he cleared with bombs 500 yards of hostile trenches, found and cut eleven mine leads, and captured three

officers and 102 men—an exploit worthy to be ranked with that of Sergeant Michael O'Leary on 1st February at Cuinchy. Sergeant-Major Barter received the Victoria Cross.

Rain fell on the following day, and this and the marshy character of the ground to some extent nullified the effect of the German cannonade, for shells often sank into the earth without bursting. For three days we fought for the German communication trench, and endeavoured to disentangle our left from the network of German *fortins*. On the Monday evening we made a second advance on the

May 17. right, this time by means of the 21st Brigade. In this fight the farthest point was reached by the 4th Cameron Highlanders, a Territorial battalion recruited largely from Skye and the Outer Islands. Their advance began at 7.30 p.m., and presently they found themselves faced by a deep ditch which could not be jumped. It was Sedgemoor over again, when the appearance of an unexpected stream threw out a whole movement. Many of the men swam it, and one company reached the farthest German communication trench. Here its flanks were in the air; it had no bombs; reinforcements could not reach it; while the Germans were closing in on both sides and "watering" the whole hinterland with their fire. In the small hours a retirement was ordered—no light task, for the parapet was high, and there were no communication trenches (since the trench was itself a communication trench). The battalion was reduced to half its strength when, worn out and mud covered, it regained the British position.

This, the first stage of the Festubert fighting,

was worth the price, for the ground gained was considerable, and we undoubtedly caused heavy losses to the enemy. But the price was high. The 20th Brigade, for example, lost 45 officers and 1,179 men. Many battalion commanders fell, including such gallant and unreplaceable officers as Lieutenant-Colonel Brook of the 8th Royal Scots, Lieutenant-Colonel Fraser of the 4th Camerons, Lieutenant-Colonel Bottomley of the 2nd Queens, and Lieutenant-Colonel Gabbett of the 1st Royal Welsh Fusiliers.

During the rest of May we continued to make progress and to consolidate our gains, though we were still short of any vital strategical point. On 19th May the 2nd and 7th Divisions were relieved, and their place taken by the Canadian Division and the Highland Division (Territorial). On the night of the 21st the Canadians made a fine attack, in which they advanced our line by several hundreds of yards. On the 22nd the Highland Division joined with the Indian Corps in a movement on the south of La Quinque Rue, and during the three following days ground was won by the Canadians and the 2nd London Division (Territorial). The 26th of May has been taken by Sir John French as the close of the battle, for on that day he gave orders to Sir Douglas Haig to curtail the artillery attack and consolidate the ground he had won.

The Commander-in-Chief thus summed up the results: "Since 16th May the First Army has pierced the enemy's lines on *May 26.* a total front of four miles. The entire first-line system of trenches has been captured on a front of 3,200 yards, and on the remaining portion the first

and second lines of trenches are in our possession. The total number of prisoners taken is eight officers and 777 of other ranks. Ten machine guns have fallen into our hands, as well as a considerable quantity of material and equipment."

Our difficulty was that which the French were finding in the Artois—that the enemy's line under attack did not bend, but broke into isolated forts. It had lost its old cohesion, and it was noteworthy that many of the prisoners taken were "rounded up," and that there were attempts by large bodies to surrender—attempts checked by the fire of their own guns. But the very weakness of the front was its strength. These *fortins*, bristling with machine guns, made any general advance impossible till they were taken; and to capture them, short as we were of artillery, was no easy matter. A new kind of stalemate, therefore, appeared on the Western front—the stalemate not of the trench line but of the field fortress. It was siege warfare in its strictest sense, for, as if under a magician's wand, the countryside became studded with strongholds.

Meanwhile in Galicia the clouds had gathered and broken. The fiercest German assault since the autumn had imperilled the very existence of the Russian armies. We must turn to the titanic warfare in the East.



## CHAPTER LIII.

### THE CLOUDS GATHER IN THE EAST.

The Anticipated Russian Offensive—The Consequences of the Fall of Przemyśl—The Russian Advance in the Carpathians—German Activity in Courland—The German Concentration behind the Donajetz—Its Secrecy and Object—The Russian Dispositions—The German Dispositions—Von Mackensen's Plan—Its Merits—Its Drawbacks—Beginning of the Movement—Von Mackensen forces the Lines of the Donajetz and the Biala—Dmitrieff retreats to the Wisloka—Brusilov's Difficulties—Retreat to the Wistok—Retreat to the San—Russian Counter-strategy.

**I**N April Western Europe looked with confidence to the Eastern front, where Russia seemed to be winning her way to a position which would give her a starting-place for her great summer offensive. We knew that she had abundance of trained men, and it was believed that there was sufficient equipment to double the force which had held the long winter lines. There was some division of opinion, indeed, as to where the offensive would fall. One school held that the old route by Cracow to the Oder promised the best results ; another considered that, having won fifty miles and more of the Carpathian watershed, and in many places dominating the southern debouchments of the passes, she would sweep down upon the Hungarian plains and strike a blow which would detach Hungary

from her alliance and render her no more a German granary. There was little evidence to decide between the rival views, for to clear the crest of the Carpathians was a necessary preliminary both for an advance to Cracow and a descent upon Hungary. But on the main point there was no difference of opinion. Russia would speedily assume a vigorous and sustained offensive, the great offensive of the Allied summer strategy.

What actually happened was, perhaps, the most dramatic reversal of fortune which the campaigns can show. So far from being the attacker, Russia became the attacked. In a second, as it seemed, the centre of gravity was changed, and the main strength of Germany descended upon her in an avalanche not less deadly than the great swing from the Sambre and Meuse in the first months of war. Under this assault the Russian offensive disappeared like smoke. Cracow and the Hungarian cornlands were forgotten, the gains of nine months vanished, and the whole fortitude of the nation was centred in a desperate effort to keep the Southern armies from destruction. It was a bitter blow to the Allies, for it involved the postponement of their main attack, and the lengthening of the war. For Russia it meant a long season of peril and heart-searching, much suffering, but never a moment of weakness or despair. She had been equable in success, and she was no less calm and resolute in misfortune. She was like that English worthy of whom Fuller wrote: "Had one seen him returning from a victory, he would by his silence have suspected that he had lost the day; and had he beheld him in retreat, he would have collected

him a conqueror by the cheerfulness of his spirit."

The release of Selivanov's army of Przemyśl enabled Ivanov to strengthen the front which opposed von Linsingen at Koziowa, and to weight the blow of Brussilov's right wing against the Uzsok and Lupkow passes. We know that the reinforcements moved south in two columns, one towards Stryj by the Sambor-Stryj railway, the other towards Sanok for the Lupkow section. A small part seems to have gone to Jaslo and Gorlice to reinforce Radko Dmitrieff's left on the Biala. But it was not possible for Russia to use her army of Przemyśl as Oyama had used Nogi's army of Port Arthur, which decided the Battle of Mukden by its unexpected offensive on the Japanese left. In a struggle for mountain passes the theatre is necessarily circumscribed, and the number of men employed is strictly determined by the slender communications and narrow approaches. Ivanov wisely held most of Selivanov's force in reserve, and the day was approaching when there was need of the ultimate reserve in man and rifle.

Przemyśl fell on 22nd March. On the 25th the Russian position was well south of the Dukla near Bartfeld, just short of the crest of the range at the Lupkow and the Uzsok, and *March 25.* then among the foothills till the Bukovina was reached, where on that day they crossed the Pruth. By the end of March the last Austrian position on the Lupkow had fallen to them, and they were pressing hard against the village of Uzsok, to the east of the pass of that name. Here they were aiming at

the spurs of the hills running from the glens of the Upper Dniester, which would command the Austrian right defending the pass. All through the first week of April the regions south of the Dukla and Lupkow and north of the Uzsok were the centre of severe fighting. The last of the winter storms was raging, and from the Dukla to the Bukovina there was snow to the thighs in all the higher glens. By the middle of the month the crest of the range for seventy miles was Russia's, but the Uzsok still maintained its stubborn defence. Brussilov, while continuing his frontal attack, pushed on with his right wing south of the watershed, and tried to work his way to the rear of the Uzsok position from the Laborcz and Ung valleys. The important junction of Eperies south of the range was rendered useless to the enemy, and the Austrians took some steps to clear the inhabitants from the Ung valley. Brussilov was now within two or three days' march of the Hungarian plains. From the 17th to the 20th the

*April 17-* Austrian offensive suddenly revived, and  
*20.* there was a vigorous counter-attack against Brussilov's left flank in the vicinity of Stryj. By the 22nd the attack had failed,

*April 22.* and the Russians in turn were pressing on the Bukovina border. In somewhat less than five weeks of fighting in the Carpathian area Ivanov had captured, according to a Russian *communiqué*, more than 30 guns and 200 machine guns, and had taken over 70,000 prisoners, including 900 officers.

The last fortnight of April saw one of those sudden thaws which Poland and Galicia know well. The high valleys became impassable, for the melt-

ing snow had brimmed every torrent. Fighting, therefore, was perforce confined to the foothills, and on 25th April another Austrian counter-attack developed all along the line from Koziova to the Delatyn Pass, and lasted for *April 25.* the better part of a week. General von Linsingen's army appeared to be aiming at the Stryj-Stanislau railway, and observers in the West assumed that this was the last desperate effort of Austria to save the Carpathian line, and with it the Hungarian lowlands. A further portion of the Przemyśl army was hurried to this section, which was precisely what the Austrians desired.

During April, too, there had been a curious activity on the extreme north of the Eastern front. On 17th March a Russian detachment had occupied the East Prussian town of *March 17.* Memel, and had held it till the 21st, when they retired before a German relieving force. On the 25th the Germans retaliated by bombarding *March 25.* the villages of the Courland coast by means of their Baltic squadron, and sending a body of East Prussian Landsturm, under Prince Joachim, across the frontier, which captured Tauroggen, north of the Niemen. On the last day of March Libau was heavily shelled by the Ger- *March 31.* man fleet, and during April the East Prussians made some progress towards the line of the Dubissa.

Observers in the West read in this northern activity and the counter-attack towards Stryj the same lesson. Both were attempts to relieve the pressure on the Carpathian line, which threatened at any moment to collapse and uncover Hun-

gary. The observers were wrong ; they were feints to mislead Russia. For in the very region which was confidently expected to be the scene of that great offensive that should give her Cracow, a mighty blow was preparing which was to wring all Galicia from her hands.

Rarely has a secret been better kept. No accurate details were known till the blow had fallen, but curiously enough the possibility had been widely canvassed for weeks, and very generally dismissed.

*April 4.* The first hint came about 4th April, when fighting was reported on Dmitrieff's right on the Biala. Small attacks were undertaken there, in order that when the great movement began it should not at first be recognized for what it was, but assumed to be merely a continuation of the sporadic assaults of the past. On 6th

*April 6.* April came a story that a German corps had been sent from Flanders by way of Munich to the Carpathians, and that Austria was withdrawing troops from Tirol for the same purpose. On 13th April large bodies of

*April 13.* German troops were reported to be passing through Czestochowa. Then, from the 17th onward, came the attacks on Brussilov's left in the Stry neighbourhood, and all the rumours seemed adequately explained. The enemy had been making a last effort to keep the invaders north of the mountains. On the 23rd the Russian newspapers discussed frankly the appearance of new German armies round Cracow. From the 24th for several days there was an almost complete absence of news. The reason was that the German censorship had suddenly been drawn tight, for the bolt was ready to launch.

From the fall of Przemyśl onward Germany had been busy behind her frontiers. Her Landsturm might go raiding with Prince Joachim, and her Bavarians battle with von Linsingen for the passes, but these were only the fringes of a mighty effort. Three-fourths at least of the winter's accumulation of shell were brought to Cracow and carried out by night to the Donajetz line. Guns of every calibre came from everywhere on the Eastern and Western fronts and from Essen and Pilsen and Budapest, and in one section alone of about twenty miles along the Biala over 1,000 pieces were placed in position. Train after train kept bringing material and pontoons, and all the supplies of the Engineers, for the land before them was a land of rivers. New hospital stations and new depôts for food and munitions were prepared close behind the front; a new telegraph network was established; great bands of cattle were driven up to their pens under cover of darkness. And then came the troops—from the East and the West fronts, and new levies from Austria and Hungary and Germany—all silently getting into place in a great hive of energy from the Nida to the Carpathians. Meanwhile Dmitrieff, in the Donajetz lines half a mile off, inspected his trenches and conducted his minor attacks and counter-attacks without an inkling of what was brewing. German organization had put forth a supreme effort. The world has never seen a greater concentration of men and guns more swiftly or more silently achieved.

How came Russia to be caught napping? The question is easier to ask than to answer. There were rumours in the West during March and April

that the next German thrust would be eastward from Cracow. The activity in Germany, the troop trains passing up the Oder valley, might be directed to this end; but, on the other hand, they might not. They might pass through the Gap of Moravia, to the south side of the Carpathians, to reinforce Boehm-Ermolli, or von Linsingen, or von Pflanzer. This possibility of a double interpretation for a movement which was known, at any rate in part, to the Russian Staff was exactly what Germany had counted on. That was why the counter-attack upon Stryj was undertaken. Up to the very eve of the great blow Russia's eyes looked south and east for the enemy rather than west.

At the same time, it was undoubtedly anticipated that a blow would be struck against the Donajetz, but the Grand Duke Nicholas had no notion of the strength in which it would be delivered. Like every other Allied commander, he was ignorant of the gigantic artillery strength which it had been Germany's winter work to accumulate. He expected no more than the ordinary attack of von Woyrsch's army, a little reinforced, perhaps, by German troops, which Dmitrieff had for four months beaten off with ease. The Donajetz position, with the river big with melting snows, was believed to be impregnable. So, indeed, it was to any ordinary attack. Dmitrieff had dug himself in securely since that day in December when he first took up the ground. Unfortunately, confident in the strength of his defence, he had neglected to create second and third lines to which in an emergency he could retire. Behind him was a series of rivers—the Wisloka, the Wistok, and the San. The first would give a good straight river line



covering the main western passes which Brussilov held. But if he was forced from the Wisloka, there was no river in the rear to afford complete cover to his front, and the situation of Brussilov in the mountains would be dangerously compromised. Dmitrieff, a brilliant and audacious leader in a manœuvre battle, showed himself too little prescient and cautious in a war of positions.

In the last week of April there had been no change in the Russian commands, except in the northern army group, where General Ruzsky, whose health had suffered gravely from the winter campaign, gave place on Easter Day to General Alexeiev, who had commanded the little army *April 4.* in the Bukovina. Alexeiev had begun his military career in the Turkish war of 1877, and had been Chief of the General Staff in the Kiev command. In the south, in Ivanov's group, Ewarts commanded the army on the Nida, Dmitrieff that on the Donajetz and the Biala, Brussilov the main army of the Carpathians, and Lechitsky the forces in the Bukovina. Ivanov's aim was to clear the passes and the southern foothills of the mountains, after which a movement south into Hungary or west towards Cracow could be undertaken at his discretion. The spring had brought him large new armies, not yet fully equipped, and especially lacking in heavy artillery. He may have considered that until he was better supplied with shells the valley warfare of the Carpathians was more suitable to his forces than an attack upon the entrenchments of Cracow.

During April there was a very complete readjustment of the commands and forces of the Teutonic

League from the Nida to the Sereth. Until then von Woyrsch, in succession to Dankl, had commanded on the Nida, the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand on the Donajetz, Boehm-Ermolli and the German von Linsingen in the Central Carpathians, and von Pflanzer in the Bukovina. Now the whole group was placed under direct German control, von Hindenburg's former lieutenant, von Mackensen, taking up the work of group commander. Von Woyrsch still commanded north of the Upper Vistula. Then, tightly packed in the narrows between the river and the hills, came the army of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand and the German army of von Mackensen. Boehm-Ermolli, with whom were Boroevitch von Bojna and von Märwitz,\* faced Brussilov's right in the Carpathians, von Linsingen was opposite Koziowa and the road to Stryj, while to the east von Bothmer and von Pflanzer commanded the front towards the Sereth. These, with one exception, were the armies of the previous month, with the commands slightly rearranged. The exception was von Mackensen's force on the left centre, which was the operative part of the whole machine.

Von Mackensen's army was probably the strongest which Germany had ever mustered under one general. We cannot yet with any exactness determine its size or its constitution. Its nucleus was the force with which he had delivered his famous thrust against the Bzura and Rawka lines, swollen with some divisions from the East Prussia command. He re-

\* He had commanded the German cavalry in the advance on Paris the previous August, and had subsequently been a corps commander in the German forces north of Przasnysz.

ceived in addition the rest of the Prussian Guard Reserve Corps from the Western front, the 10th Corps (Hanover), which had once been with von Kluck, and the 41st Reserve Corps. We saw in the previous chapter that the Germans had created fourteen new "divisions of assault" by skimming the cream from their first-line corps. How many of these von Mackensen received is still in doubt; two for certain were with him, and it is possible that as the fight continued he received not less than eight. His units had been brought up to full strength by the inclusion of recruits from the classes just called to the colours, and these recruits, be it remembered, were of the best quality. Altogether it is probable that his thrusting weapon, his phalanx of assault, was not less than ten corps strong, and its artillery supports were far superior to those of the whole Russian southern front. One report put his heavy batteries as high as 2,000 pieces, and they cannot have been less than 1,500. The Austrian strength—the total army except the two corps facing Serbia—was at the moment something over a million, and scattered among the different commands to give them stiffening were at least six German corps, mostly new formations like the 31st and 33rd, but including one first-line Bavarian corps. The total force from the Nida to the Sereth we may estimate as not less than two millions. Against this Russia could, if she chose, produce an equivalent number of men, but she had not the equipment. Her immense man-power was still hampered by an inadequate machine. It was her fate to play the part of von Winkelried at Sempach, and draw a multitude of spears to her naked breast.

Von Mackensen, soon to be made a field-marshal for his services, was one of the ablest of the German generals. A Saxon by birth, he had risen, like von Kluck, by sheer merit to high command. He had been responsible for the great offensive of November which had given Germany Western Poland, and had gravely threatened Warsaw. It is an idle task to speculate upon the special responsibility for a strategic scheme. Von Hindenburg had accustomed the world to look for sledgehammer blows, and much of the new offensive was after the true Hindenburg fashion. But there were elements of ingenuity which were not in his manner, and these, and the skilful tactical handling, should probably go to von Mackensen's credit. Germany had never played her traditional game to more brilliant effect than in the movement which we have now to relate. It was more dramatic than her great sweep on Paris in August, for then she was working in the heyday of her first enthusiasm; whereas now she was stemming a hostile tide after long months of drawn battles. There was no degeneracy in the fighting quality of a Power which could thus belie the expectation of the world, and out of set-backs and checks snatch the materials for a sounding triumph.

The elements of von Mackensen's plan were simple, like the elements of all great strategy. The main fact was that, for all her success, Russia's southern position was not a good one. She was holding the southern side of a salient, and so was virtually enveloped; only the mountain barrier of the Carpathians and the weakness of the Austrian armies prevented her from suffering the usual effects

of envelopment. Now in such a position a strong blow does not merely dint a line ; it may compel a wholesale retreat of remote parts of the front. Russia's communications were the main railway through Przemyśl and Lemberg, and the southern line which follows the foothills by Jasło, Sanok, and Stryj. A thrust from the Bukovina which recaptured Lemberg would mean the retreat of the whole Russian front in Western Galicia. A blow from the central passes which reached Jaroslav would cut off Dmitrieff on the Donajetz and the bulk of Brussilov's army. Finally, a thrust from the Donajetz which succeeded would uncover the Galician outlets of the passes which Russia held, and drive Brussilov back from the watershed. Obviously the first and second of these plans, if they could be compassed, would be the most fruitful. But Germany's trump card was her mass of artillery, and this could not be handled with precision among the wooded glens of the Bukovina or the strait valleys of the Central Carpathians. The place for it was the rolling plateau of Galicia. Accordingly the thrust was made from the Donajetz.

The ultimate aim was clear. If the German guns were numerous enough and fully supplied with ammunition, there would be no rest for the Russian armies till they were outside the zone of good Austrian railways, and back among the indifferent communications beyond their own frontier. It was a mathematical calculation. A certain weight of shell would make any position untenable. This meant that Przemyśl and Lemberg would be retaken and handed back to Austria as a proof of the potency of her ally. It meant that the valuable

oil-fields of Galicia would once again be in German hands. It meant that the Hungarian cornlands would be safe, and Count Tisza would be appeased. It meant that the coquetries of Rumania with the Allies would be summarily ended. She would no longer be disposed to attack Austria, and, if she had the disposition, she would not have the power.

These were political ends, important, but still secondary. The main purpose was military—not the reoccupation of territory, but the crippling of Russia's field armies. If von Mackensen could push Ivanov out of Galicia, a time would come when the Russian front would have to fall back everywhere to conform. The ultimate position would be southwest of the railway from Rovno by Cholm, Lublin, and Ivangorod to Warsaw, which would provide it with lateral communications. If that position was broken, then Warsaw must fall, and the whole front retire behind the Polish Triangle. This would mean that the armies of the north, based on Petrograd and Moscow, and the armies of the south, based on Kiev, were in danger of being separated by that triangle of lake and swamp called the Marshes of Pinsk or Pripet, over which lay no communications for large masses of modern troops. If that happened, then Alexeiev and Ivanov would be out of touch. It was not the capture of Warsaw which would damage Russia's position, but this isolation of her army groups. No offensive would be possible for months if such a fate was hers. The German high command had at the moment no desire to risk the fortune of Charles XII. and Napoleon, and embark on a serious invasion of Russia. Enough for them to put the Russian armies temporarily out of action.

The plan was bold and sagacious, but it had one drawback. It demanded nothing short of complete success. If the Russian forces could be driven over their border, and so split up that concentrated action was impossible for many months, then indeed a great thing would have been gained, and a million men might be spared to reinforce the Western front. But it was not enough merely to drive them out of Galicia. It would be a costly process, and even though the Russians lost more heavily, they could afford it better. Somewhere in the not very distant future lurked for Germany the spectre of shortage of men, and, if she wasted her manhood in her costly methods of war for the sake of anything but the most decisive successes, her case would be evil. A new trench line on the eastern Galician frontier would be no real change in the situation. It would be more difficult to hold, for her lines of communication would be several hundred miles longer, and as the result of her efforts she would have fewer men to hold it with. Russia would still be permitted a dangerous offensive. Therefore it was incumbent upon von Mackensen to carry out the whole of his plan. Nothing less would suffice. A partial success, however splendid it might appear, would be a failure, for it would leave him weaker and in a worse position than when he started.

On the morning of Wednesday, 28th April, the Austrian-German front lay along the left bank of the Donajetz to its junction with the Biala; then along the left bank of the Biala to the foothills of the Carpathians, where

*April 28.*

it crossed to the right bank in the vicinity of Ropa. Its communications were good, for it had for its left the Vistula, for its centre the main railway from Cracow, and for its right the line which runs through Novo Sandek to the junction at Grybow, on the Biala. The possession of Tarnow, then held by Dmitrieff, would give it a valuable cross line up the Biala valley.

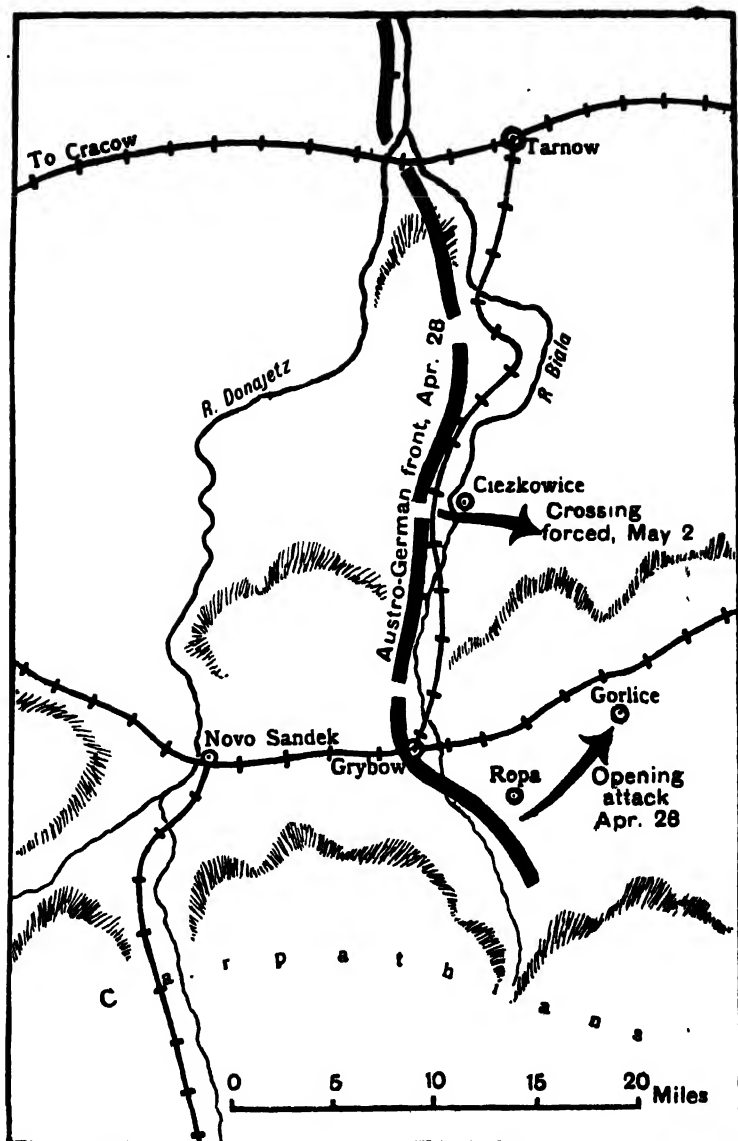
During these last days Dmitrieff was growing anxious. He began to realize that a great effort was pending, and he applied to Ivanov for two further corps. By some blunder of a staff officer, the request never reached Ivanov. Dmitrieff was left to meet the enemy with no more than his winter strength.

On the 28th the action began with an advance of von Mackensen's right on the Upper Biala towards Gorlice. The place was skilfully chosen, for it had already been the object of some minor attacks, and the additional pressure did not at first reveal the importance of the movement. It is a vital advantage for a general not only to keep his concentration secret, but to get the actual fighting begun before the enemy realizes what it means. Further, a success here would outflank Dmitrieff's position, and would threaten the rear of Brussilov's right wing, now well south of the Dukla Pass.

For two days the attack progressed, positions were won, and Dmitrieff was compelled to weaken his front in order to support his left.

*May 1.* Then on Saturday, 1st May, the great batteries were loosed. The centre of the attack was now the village of Cieszkowice, half-way between Grybow and Tarnow. Under cover of a prodigious artillery fire bridges were pushed across the Biala,





The Forcing of the Donajetz-Biala Line.

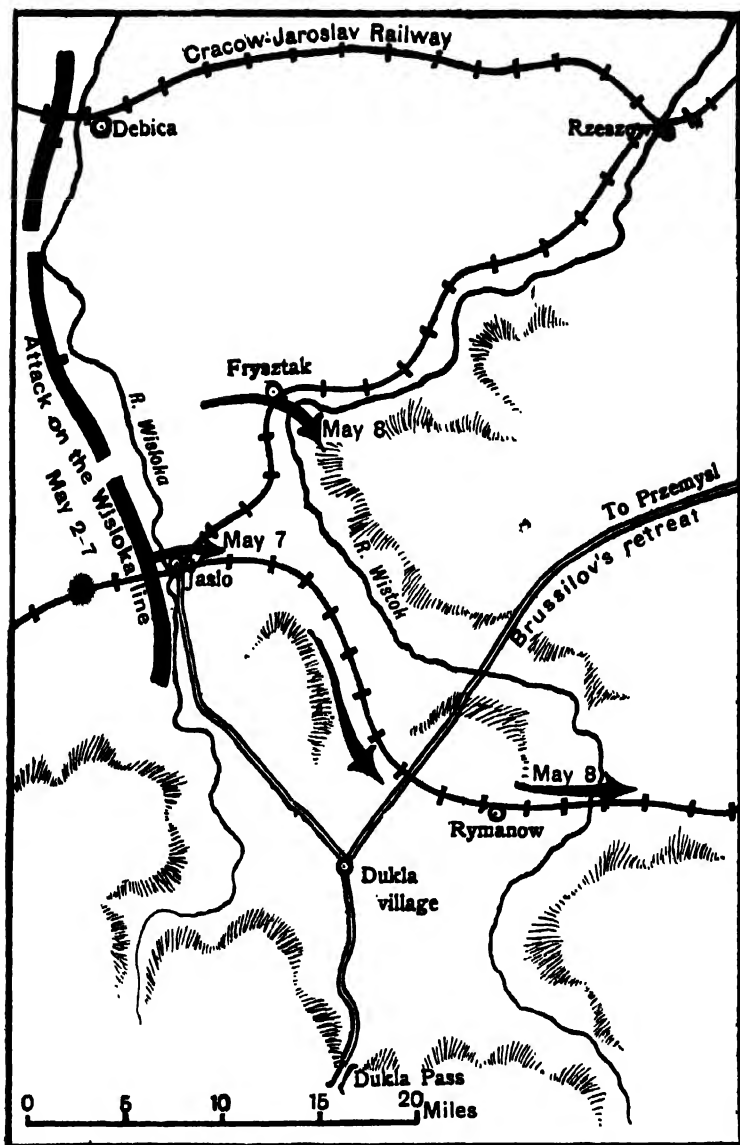
and Cieszkowice was taken. Its oil tanks were set on fire, and soon it was a heap of smouldering ruins. Hundreds of guns were unmasked northward along the valley, and the Russian position was simply blown out of existence. Over 700,000 shells were said to have been hurled into the Russian trenches. It was Neuve Chapelle over again, and a greater than Neuve Chapelle. The Russians had no artillery powerful enough to check the awful storm. Taken by surprise, they made what fight they could, but the bravest of men cannot continue in trenches which have ceased to exist. Meanwhile the force which had crossed at Cieszkowice acted in conjunction with the advance from Ropa, took Gorlice, and turned the whole of Dmitrieff's front.

*May 2.* On Sunday, 2nd May, the defence collapsed. Masses of the enemy had forced the Donajetz-Biala line at various points, and by that afternoon the Russians were retreating twenty miles to the line of the Wisloka.

Von Mackensen had won an indisputable victory. The retreat to the Wisloka was not far from a rout, and Dmitrieff paid the penalty in guns and men for not having prepared a series of alternative positions. Especially in the south the Russians fared ill. The troops in the Carpathian foothills extricated themselves only with heavy losses, which fell especially upon the 48th Division. The Wisloka was a river and no more; no entrenchments had been made ready; and the guns which had driven in the Donajetz line would have little difficulty in annihilating one so conspicuously weaker.

But by this time the Russians had recovered from their first surprise, and they made a wonderful

stand on the Wisloka. Reinforcements had been hurried up, including General Irmanov's famous Caucasian Corps from the Bzura front. The Caucasians, taking counsel from the valour of their hearts, defied the artillery storm and got to grips with the enemy. They lost 10,000 men, for they had no heavy guns; but in close-quarter fighting, though reduced to 6,000 men, they captured a heavy battery, took 7,000 prisoners, and slew many thousands more. But in spite of this more than mortal courage, the case was hopeless. For five days—from Sunday, 2nd May, to Friday, 7th May—the Russians clung to their shallow trenches on its eastern bank. Von Mackensen delivered his main attack against the railway crossing at Jaslo, and forced it early on the morning of the 7th. Had the Wisloka been held the Dukla might still have been saved, but when it went the troops in the hills were in deadly danger. They fell back in something of a rout, and von Mackensen's right gave them no rest. Their goal was the upper glen of the Wistok, and the Germans followed along the two railways which branch eastward from Jaslo. By the Saturday evening the enemy had won the Wistok, crossing by the railway bridge east of Rymanow, and lower down at the sharp bend of the river near Frysztak. Only the Russian right succeeded in making a stand. It ran from Debica, on the Cracow-Jaroslav line, to the Vistula, a few miles west of the point where it receives the Wisloka. Ewarts' army on the north shore had meantime fallen back from the Nida to the Czarna, to conform with the southern retirement. The forcing of the Upper Wistok had in effect



The Passage of the Wisloka and the Wistok.

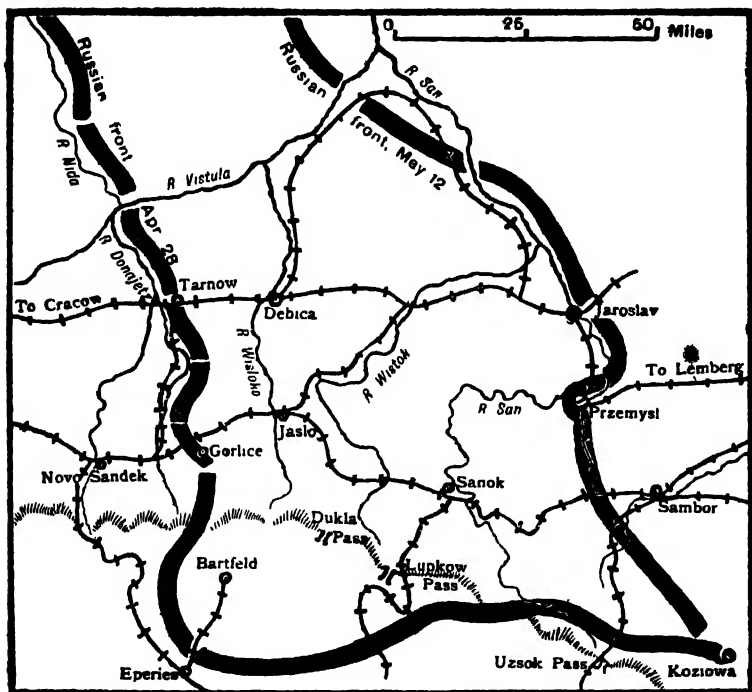
broken the Russian line. For a moment it looked as if von Mackensen were about to roll up the two halves and effect a second Sedan. But the Russians were now alive to the German purpose, and had devised a strategy to meet the danger. At all costs they must prevent a disaster to their left, so they pushed out strong forces from Sanok, on the Upper San, to stem the enemy's tide, which was surging now beyond the Upper Wistok. This temporary check enabled Brussilov's army, after much desperate fighting during the Sunday and Monday, to extricate itself from the Carpathian foothills. The troops from south of the Dukla and Lupkow passes had a long way to travel, and the Germans naturally made many prisoners. At the same time Ivanov's right centre was compelled to fall back from the Wisloka to the Lower Wistok.

Next day, Tuesday, 11th May, the retirement to the San began. The Russian left was already across its upper waters, and by the Wednesday evening the bulk of the line *May 11.* lay just west of the Lower San as far as Przemyśl and then south across the broken country to the Upper Dniester, whence it was continued to the old Koziowa position, which was still intact. During the two following days the San was crossed, except in its extreme lower course, and the front ran from Przemyśl northward along the right bank of the river. That was on the evening of Friday, 14th May. The latter part of the retirement *May 14.* was managed with great skill and in perfect order. The bridge-head at Jaroslav was held till troops and guns were safely across, in spite of all von Mackensen's efforts to turn the retreat

into a rout. In a fortnight the army of Dmitrieff had fallen back eighty-five miles, and had lost heavily in prisoners and in material—losses exceeded by Brussilov's troops, who had to cut their way out of the hills. In some cases a corps lost three-fourths of its strength. But both armies were still in being. Ivanov's southern front had not been broken.

The Russian alignment along the San marked the end of the first stage of the great German offensive in the East. That stage had within itself two phases. There was first the overwhelming thrust and the huddled Russian retreat till the Wistok was reached. They stayed not upon the order of their going, outnumbered as they were, and blasted and scorched by the fiercest artillery bombardment which the world had seen. We know what was the result of Neuve Chapelle and Carency, and here the fire was greater, more universal, and more sustained. In these circumstances the stand for five days on the Wisloka, which enabled the guns to get away and saved Brussilov from destruction, must rank as a surprising feat of arms. Like the brother of Æschylus, who at Salamis grappled a Persian ship, and when his hands were cut off clung by his teeth, thereby earning immortal fame among his countrymen, the Russians in their uttermost peril showed all the craggy fortitude of their race. Their rear-guards held the pass till the army could make good its escape. Not less fine was the dash of Brussilov's troops through the Carpathian foothills. They fought their way to safety as Bulgakov's remnant had fought in February through the Augustovo forests. Their losses were terrible, but it was still an army that assembled on the Wistok.

From the Wistok onward the case was changed. The Grand Duke Nicholas had mastered the facts of the situation. It was idle to hope to withstand von Mackensen's onslaught. That terrific phalanx of men in close formation, preceded by a thunder-



The Russian Retreat from the Donajetz to the San.

storm of shell, could only be countered by a machine of the same quality, and that Russia did not possess. The German Staff was right. The laws of mathematics apply universally, and this was a mathematical calculation. Russia must give way before the blast. But the most elaborate accumulation of

war material will some day be expended, and a phalanx is the weaker for every thrust. It was Russia's business to exhaust the great machine by drawing it out to full stretch, though hundreds of miles of territory should be sacrificed in the process. The danger was from von Mackensen. If we may judge by the stand of the Russian right, the army of the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand had not proved over formidable; and it is obvious that that of Boehm-Ermolli had blundered, or Brussilov, caught between two fires, would never have been able to bring away most of his forces. Before von Mackensen retreat must be the only course, but it must be retreat in close contact with the enemy, drawing his fire, exhausting his munitions, and depleting his ranks. It could not be such a retreat as ~~fired~~ on Charles XII. and Napoleon, but one in which the Austro-German troops had to fight for every mile and halt again and again on bloody battlefields. From the Wistok onwards the Grand Duke Nicholas had the reins tight in his hands. His object was to save the most for Russia at the greatest cost to the enemy.

But he made no mistake about the German strength. His policy involved a retreat not of miles and days, but of leagues and weeks. Behind Ivanov's line lay Przemyśl, for whose capture ten weeks before all the bells in Russia had rung, and Lemberg, which had been the first spoil of Russian arms. Two hundred miles north was the great city of Warsaw, for which Germany had thrice striven in vain. Such a retreat as the Grand Duke contemplated might give all three to German hands, and one at least was doomed when his armies fell back



on the San. But it has always been a trait of that great nation that it sits loose in its territorial affections. The words which Kutusov, in Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, speaks to his council on the question of the sacrifice of Moscow, have always been the creed of Russia's generals.\* No province or ancient city was to be weighed for a moment against the safety of the armies of Russia. The Grand Duke was aware that von Mackensen must succeed fully or not at all, and he knew that success did not mean the occupation of territory. Though the Russian armies were to be forced back to the Bug and the Sereth, and Warsaw, Lemberg, and Przemysl were to be prize of the conqueror, yet if these armies were still intact the adventure had failed.

\* "The ancient and holy capital of Russia! Allow me to remind your Excellency that the phrase conveys absolutely no meaning to Russian hearts. . . . It is simply a military problem, to be stated as follows: Since the safety of the country depends on the army, is it more advantageous to risk its destruction and the loss of Moscow by fighting a pitched battle, or to withdraw without resistance and leave the city to its fate? . . . In virtue of the power placed in my hands by the Czar and my country, I command that we shall retreat."

## CHAPTER LIV.

### IVANOV'S RETREAT.

Situation on 14th May—Meaning of von Mackensen's "Phalanx"—Ewarts' Counter-attack at Opatow—Russian Success on Bukovina Frontier—Unimportance of Flank Battles—The Battle of the San—Situation of Przemyśl—Russians evacuate the Fortress—Von Mackensen enters Przemyśl—Value of his Success—Von Linsingen crosses the Dniester—Brussilov forces him back—Von Mackensen swings North-east—Capture of Mosciska—Russians retire on Grodek Position—Russian Left forced back from the Pruth—Von Mackensen turns Lemberg on the North—Fall of Lemberg—Its Significance—Ivanov's Position on 21st June—Von Mackensen's Aim—German Movement in Courland and on the Narev—German Dispositions—Beginning of Second Phase in German Attack.

**I**T was now the morning of Friday, 14th May. Ivanov's right, under Ewarts, was being pushed towards the Vistula, but was still in the neighbourhood of Opatow. His right centre was west of the Lower San, his centre east of the river had looped forward so as to cover Przemyśl, his left centre was along the Upper Dniester, while his left was conducting a counter-offensive in the district between the Dniester and the Pruth. The Russian wings, as we shall see, were having some success, but the main movement was in the centre, where von Mackensen's phalanx was slowly coming once again into action. It travelled leisurely, for with the best communications

in the world you cannot move 2,000 heavy pieces and a great weight of shells with the speed of infantry. It had for its passage the two good railways of Western Galicia, and along the highroads light rails had been laid to facilitate its transport. May on the Eastern front was a month of constant rain, and rivers and floods clogged the mobility of the great machine. Once again the Russians drew some assistance from the weather.

What are we to understand by a "phalanx" as used in this supreme German thrust? To the minds of most people the word brings the picture of a compact oblong of men, packed like sardines, and gaining their effect by the sheer weight of human bodies. If they elaborate the idea they still think of the phalanx of Pyrrhus or Alexander, or the dense infantry masses of mediaeval battles. But the whole conception is erroneous in modern war. The Germans believed in massed attacks,\* but the density of their order was relative to the British practice, and had always in view the conditions laid down by modern weapons. A mass is a good target, and its striking power is at any one moment only the striking power of the men in its front rank. Von Mackensen would seem to have launched his infantry in successive lines, perhaps a score of yards apart. In each line the men were in what we should regard as close order, probably one man to the yard, which would appear to be the limit of density compatible with free individual movement. This formation had the moral effect of weight: each man felt that he was closely supported to left and right and behind. We must therefore think of von Mack-

\* See Vol. II., p. 30 and p. 206.

ensen's tactics as a series of efforts by lines of men in close order, and not the impulsive power of a serried mass.

Such tactics, according to the British view, would not prevail against well-disciplined and well-entrenched infantry. The experiment was tried at Mons and at Ypres, and failed. But von Mackensen calculated upon the disintegrating effect of his artillery bombardments. It was not an attack of massed infantry upon infantry in position, but of fresh troops against a dazed and broken foe. The phalanx was destined to perform the work usually assigned to cavalry—to complete an action by disintegrating the last remnants of the defence. On this theory von Mackensen's tactics were sound, but the artillery preparation beforehand had to be sufficient. Otherwise, if anything was left to the defence, the attack lost terribly. In this advance there were places where the bombardment was incomplete, and the German infantry came upon trench lines still held and machine-gun positions, and went down like corn before the scythe. In spite of their many guns, there is reason to believe that between the Donajetz and the San the German ranks paid a toll scarcely less heavy than the Russian.

It was Ivanov's aim to check the enemy till such time as Przemyśl could be cleared of supplies and armament. His method was a holding battle on his centre and a vigorous counter-thrust on his wings. Let us look first at the battles on the flanks.

Ewarts' army, the right wing of Ivanov's command, had been compelled by the retirement of the centre to fall back from the Nida towards the Vistula. It was opposed by von Woyrsch's Austrian

army, which had not the fighting value of von Mackensen's centre, and its retreat was determined by the strategical necessity of conforming, rather than by superior pressure. It retired behind Kielce, which gave von Woyrsch the railway junction and the branch line to Ostrowiecs. It will be remembered that in the first assault on Warsaw this line had played a great part, since from Ostrowiecs a good road led to the easiest crossing of the Middle Vistula at Josefov. On Friday, 14th May, the Russian right was well in front of Ostrowiecs, and ran through the town of Opatow to the Vistula, west of its confluence with the San.

Ivanov resolved to attempt a counter-attack which would both check the dangerous move on Josefov and, if fortune favoured, do something to relieve the pressure on his centre. Von Woyrsch's advance guard, consisting from left to right of two German divisions, the Austrian 25th Division under the Archduke Peter Ferdinand, an Austrian Landwehr division, and a Hungarian Honvéd division, was progressing comfortably under the impression that the Russians would not make a stand till the Vistula was reached, when, on the morning of Saturday, 15th May, Ewerts suddenly *May 15.* struck. His blow was aimed at both flanks of the advance, while his Cossacks fetched a wide circuit and fell upon the Austrian communications. The result was that, in a three days' battle, von Woyrsch was well beaten with nearly 30,000 casualties, and fell back to west of Iwaniska, where he received reinforcements which enabled him to make a stand. This action was fought largely with the bayonet, and since the enemy was caught in the

open, the traditional Russian pre-eminence in this arm had full play. The troops just south of Ewarts along the San, infected by the activity on their right, delivered a fierce attack, which drove back the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand to the town of Tarnobrzeg, on the Vistula. Here the action was stayed, rather because of Ivanov's general orders than because the Russian energy was exhausted. With his right wing much depleted for supports to his centre, he had not the troops to attempt a true enveloping action on a flank.

On the extreme Russian left, on the frontiers of the Bukovina, von Pflanzer's forces had been gradually pushing back the 9th Army of General Lechitsky. He had a position which on his left was about half-way between Nadworna, on the Delatyn railway, and the important junction of Stanislau. His right centre was on the Lower Dniester, holding the railway crossing of Zalestchiki. On 9th May

*May 9.* the Russians struck at this extended front, which can scarcely have been less than a hundred miles long, and in five days' fighting cleared von Pflanzer from the Dniester line.

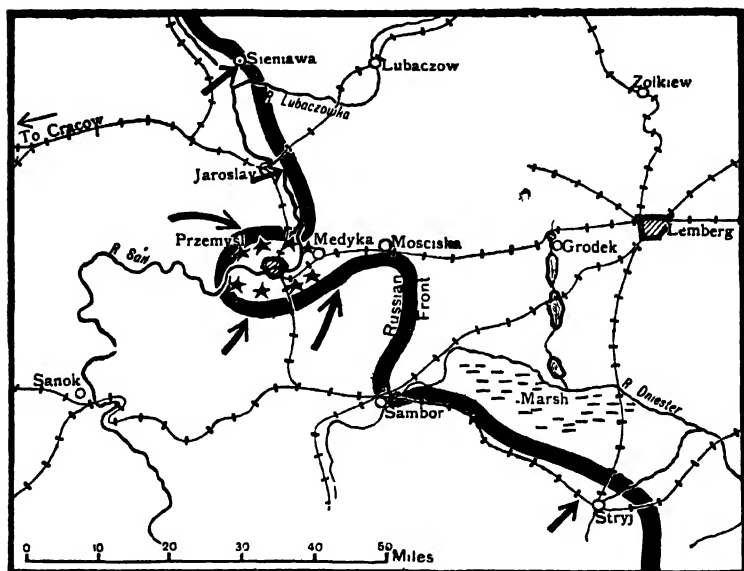
*May 15.* By Saturday, the 15th, the Austrian left was back on the Pruth, and Nadworna was in Russian hands. The Russians, too, were on the south side of the Pruth at Sniatyn, and they had cut the railway between Austria and the Bukovina. They were threatening, but had not taken, the towns of Kolomea and Czernowitz.

It was a considerable success. They had driven back the enemy in some places as much as thirty miles, and had for the moment checked a movement which might have cut one of their communi-

cations with southern Russia. On a different kind of front these two rapid and effective blows at the wings would have compelled a halt in the centre. But in the situation of the Galician armies they had only a local effect. The Russian right, as we have seen, was too weak to attempt an enveloping movement or the cutting of von Mackensen's and the Archduke Joseph's communications. The Russian left, though it drove the enemy back to the hills, could incommode von Pflanzer only, and not the whole Austro-German command. To strike at the main enemy communications it would have to advance over the passes into the Hungarian plains, and for this it had not the men or munitions. The Carpathian barrier had the effect of making the central enemy advance singularly insensitive to what happened on its right wing. We may, therefore, regard Ivanov's two counter-attacks as merely efforts to gain time. The centre of gravity was on the San, where von Mackensen's success would render nugatory the losses of von Woyrsch or von Pflanzer.

The Battle of the San began on Saturday, 15th May, and must rank as one of the major conflicts of the war. It is important to note the Austro-German dispositions, and the direction of the converging attacks. On the left the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand was operating against the Lower San, from the Vistula up to the neighbourhood of Jaroslav. The Russians held the left bank close to the stream from Jaroslav down to Sieniawa, and from that point ran well to the west till the Vistula was reached at Tarnobrzeg. From Jaroslav they followed the San in front of Przemyśl, bent round in a shallow salient to the railway junction of

Dobromil, and then ran east by Sambor, Drohobycz, and Stryj, covering the upper waters of the Dniester. Against the section Jaroslav-Przemysl von Mackensen's phalanx was advancing on a narrow front, with the corps of Boroevitch von Bojna supporting its right. Boehm-Ermolli's forces, having crossed the Dukla and Lupkow passes, were



Situation on the Eve of the Recapture of Przemyśl.

moving against the re-entrant of the salient, just south of Przemyśl; and his right wing, under von Marwitz, was aiming at the railway between Dobromil and Sambor. Von Linsingen, having at last forced the Koziowa position, was moving upon Stryj and the line of the Dniester, with his right flung out in the direction of Halicz, where contact was attained with the extreme right, under von Pflanzer.



About midnight on Saturday Jaroslav fell. The Russian rearguard was driven from the low heights west of the town, but it had fought a delaying action sufficient to ensure the passage of the San for the rest of the Russian centre. All Sunday *May 16*—the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand battled <sup>17</sup> for the San crossings, and on Monday 160,000 men had forded the river at several places, principally by the bridges of Jaroslav and by the shallows of Lezachow. Next day, Tuesday, he had taken Sieniawa, and the Russian right *May 18* was two miles back from the eastern bank, astride the tributary stream of the Lubaczowka. Here it made a new stand. It would appear that von Mackensen's phalanx had not yet come up into line, for during these days there was no strong attack upon Przemyśl from the west.

It was otherwise with the re-entrant on the south. On Saturday, the 15th, von Marwitz captured the railway junctions of Dobromil and Sambor, and pushed northward against the Przemyśl lines. On the 18th he captured Hussakow and presently lost it, and next day took Lutkow and held it. This attack was clearly most dangerous, for an advance of a few more miles would give the enemy control of the main line between Przemyśl and Lemberg, and cut off the troops in the city. The hazard of such a position, as we have already seen, is not the apex of the salient, but the angles at which it joins the main front. At Ypres in October the most deadly German attacks were on Bixschoote in the north and the Klein Zillebeke ridge in the south. At Lodz in November the German salient was almost destroyed by the Russian pressure on the two sides

of its base. The chief danger, therefore, came at the moment from Boehm-Ermolli. Farther east von Linsingen was attacking Stryj and the Dniester line, which was now held by Brussilov's army of the Carpathians.

Przemysl, after its capture by Selivanov on 22nd March, had not been put in a state of defence. It is improbable that anything had been done to restore the forts, but the western works, which had not been seriously assailed, remained as they were when von Kusmanek held the city. Inside the place, however, were a number of guns, captured from the Austrians, which had not been removed, a quantity of supplies, and a good deal of rolling stock, which had accumulated in the great junction. Such materials cannot be removed in a few hours, and it was Russia's aim to hold Przemysl long enough to permit her to get them clear away by the Lemberg railway. Ivanov was well aware of the danger of the salient, and had no sentimental desire to hold the fortress. All he asked for was a week or so to complete its evacuation.

From the 20th of May till Wednesday, the 2nd of June, the work of clearance went on, while von Mackensen hammered at the western forts and the river line as far as Jaroslav, and Boehm-Ermolli attempted to force the southern re-entrant, or at any rate get the Lemberg railway under his fire. Von Marwitz, on his right, made no progress, being held up by the impassable marshes of the Dniester between Drohobycz and Komarno. Von Mackensen succeeded in crossing the San at Radymno, just below its junction with the little river Wisnia, a success which made the neck of the Przemysl

salient no more than twelve miles across. But meantime the Russian right pushed the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand out of Sieniawa and Lezachow, forced him in some places back across the San, and threatened the flank of von Mackensen's position at Radymno. The consequence was that what might have been a most dangerous attack upon the northern re-entrant was for the moment foiled. It was clear that von Mackensen had weakened the armies on both sides of him for the attack upon the salient itself.

The days of Przemyśl were now numbered. The Austro-German lines were pressing in on three sides, and during the last two days of May the outer defences began to crumble. By the evening of Monday, 31st May, the Bavarian infantry had carried the northern forts, *May 31.* and on the Tuesday afternoon the southern forts were evacuated. At 3.30 on the morning of Wednesday, 2nd June, von Mackensen entered the city. The Russians had held *June 2.* it a little over two months.

It is idle to underrate the significance of von Mackensen's success. He had won back a city whose capture had been the occasion of rejoicing in every Russian town and village. If Russia rated Przemyśl lightly, why, Germany might ask, did she exult over its fall in March? Germany was enabled to hand back to her ally her chief fortress, and thereby greatly strengthen Austria's loyalty to the alliance. But it is equally idle to rate the exploit too high. The recapture of Przemyśl was without military significance except as an incident in the Russian retreat. No booty to speak of fell into Austro-

German hands. The rolling stock, the stores, and most of the captured guns had gone eastward, and only a few useless pieces remained to be magnified in German *communiqués* into an arsenal of artillery.

We can now see something of the method of the great German advance. Von Mackensen's phalanx travelled slowly. The wings pushed out beyond the centre, and against them the Russians fought delaying actions with some success. But so soon as the heavy guns arrived retreat became necessary, and only the fortifications of Przemysl enabled the Russian centre to make so long a stand. It was this slowness of the phalanx which enabled Przemysl to be evacuated with little loss. Had von Mackensen been in Boehm-Ermolli's place about the 20th of May the consequences would have been very different.

One result of the method was a constant shifting of the main centre of operations. Now it was Jaroslav, now the southern re-entrant, now the western front of the salient, and, after Przemysl's fall, it travelled many miles to the south. While the great machine was getting in order for a further movement, it fell to another army to take the next step in the offensive.

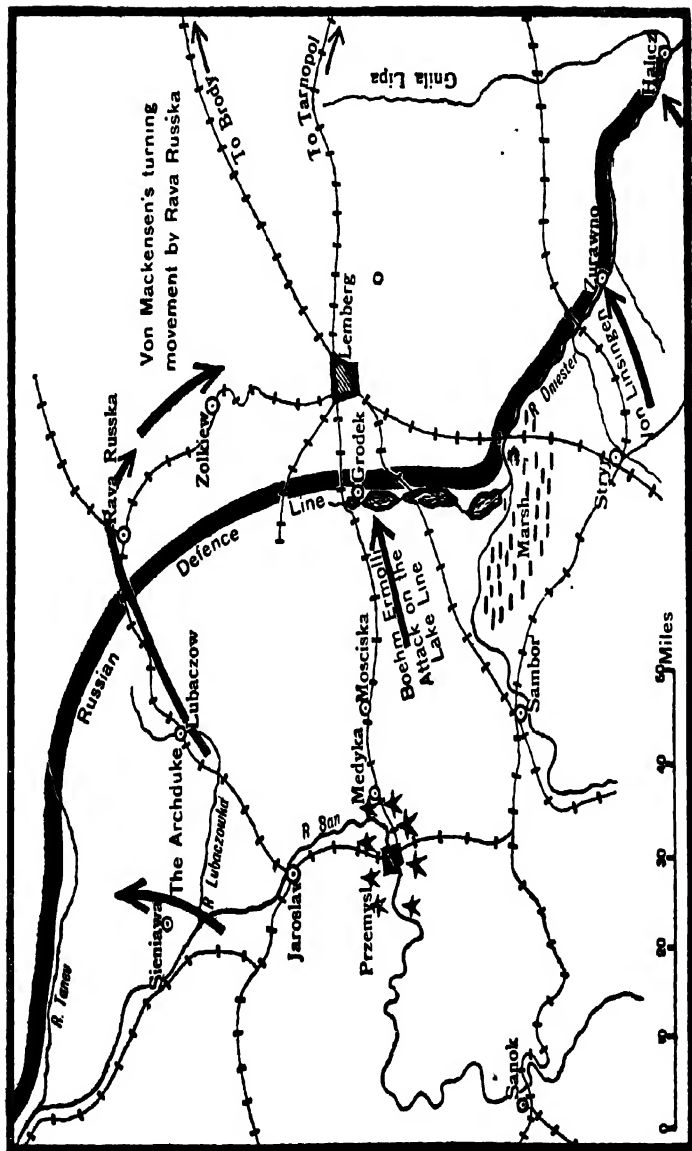
It was the turn of von Linsingen. Stryj fell to him on Tuesday, 1st June, after an attack in which

*June 1.* a division of the Prussian Guard played the main part. The place was important as a railway centre, and Brussilov seems to have held on too long, for he lost some guns and several thousand prisoners. The fall of Przemysl a day later compelled an alteration in the Russian front. It now ran west of the Lower San, crossing to the

east bank below Radymno, and following the valley of the Wisnia, west of Mosciska, till it reached the Dniester, west of the great marshes. After that its line was the cañon of the Dniester till it dipped south by Stanislau and Nadworna to the Pruth.

On Monday, 7th June, von Linsingen forced the crossing of the Dniester at Zurawno, and occupied the high ground north of the river. The place should be noted, for it was the *June 7.* key to the river line. The river Stryj, descending from the Carpathians and passing the town of that name, enters the Dniester at Zydaczow, a village which marks the eastern end of the main Dniester marshes. To cross there meant that an army had to ford both the Stryj and the Dniester, which run for a short way parallel before they join. East of Zydaczow is a lesser belt of marsh, and then comes Zurawno, with firm land on both sides, an easy ford, and good roads from railhead. Von Linsingen chose his front well, forced a passage, and got the bulk of his army across. Von Bothmer commanded the main advance, and succeeded in taking the northern heights and advancing some way into the forests towards the railway from Stryj to Tarnopol. He was now little more than forty miles as the crow flies from Lemberg.

On 8th June Brussilov turned and caught him. It was the old story, so familiar in these campaigns, a repetition of what happened at Augustovo in September and at Kazimirjev *June 8-* in October. The German machine got *II.* too far from its railways, its guns and ammunition travelled too slowly by the bad country roads, and the more mobile Russians caught it at a disadvantage.



### The Operations for the Recapture of Lemberg.

The black line shows the position taken up by the Russians to cover the place.

Von Bothmer, in a three days' battle, was flung back across the Dniester with heavy loss—17 guns, 49 machine guns, and more than 15,000 prisoners, including an entire company of the Prussian Guard.

But this success could have no influence upon the general situation. About the same time von Pflanzer began to move in the east, and he had against him a force much depleted to supply reinforcements for the centre. Von Linsingen's right forced a crossing of the Dniester at Zaleszky above Halicz; von Pflanzer pushed Lechitsky from the Pruth to the Dniester, took Stanislau, and near Czernowitz forced the entire Russian left back to the Russian frontier. Meanwhile von Mackensen's phalanx was again moving, this time in a north-easterly direction. He cleared the Russians from the San between Sieniawa and Jaroslav, and, pivoting on Sieniawa, swung round his right towards Mosciska. In this advance he made many prisoners, for the sudden change of direction made the Russian retirement difficult. At first the line of the Lubaczowka was held, and thence by Mosciska to the Dniester. But there there could be no continuance. On 14th June von Marwitz captured *June 14.* Mosciska, and the whole Russian centre began to retire on the famous Grodek positions. Ewarts was now back from Opatow and Ostrowiecs, and approaching the left bank of the Vistula, the right centre was on the San and the Tanev, the centre among the Grodek ponds, and Brussilov and Lechitsky along the Dniester as far as the frontier.

The Grodek position is a line of shallow, swampy lakes, in all some fifteen miles long. Few roads cross the tangle, and the place is impregnable to most

armies. It was the district where the Russian commanders anticipated that von Auffenberg would make a stand after the capture of Lemberg in September. But such a position, if it cannot be forced, can be turned, and Ivanov was unable to hold it now for the same reason as von Auffenberg in the autumn. Then Ruzsky had turned it on the north, and now von Mackensen followed the same strategy. Lemberg was doomed as soon as the phalanx forced the Sieniawa-Jaroslav line, and swung its right towards Mosciska. Moving along the Jaroslav-Rava Russka railway, it was certain, unless checked, to outflank the Lemberg defence on the north. Boehm-Ermolli advanced against Grodek, von Linsingen and von Pflanzer battled for the Dniester crossings, but the operative part of the movement was that of the great phalanx, advancing steadily north-east across the Lubaczowka, in a country where there could be no real defence short of the valley of the Bug.

By the 16th the army of the Archduke Joseph had compelled a Russian retreat from the east bank

*June 16.* of the Lower San, and was already, in part, inside the borders of Russian Poland, with its right nearing Tarnograd. Von Mackensen was moving on a broad front towards Rava Russka, while Boehm-Ermolli advanced directly upon the Grodek position. The evacuation of Lemberg had begun, and thousands of

*June 17.* passports were issued for Russia. On the 17th von Mackensen's right was in the town

*June 19.* of Javorov. On the 19th his advance guard was very near Rava Russka, the scene of Ruzsky's great victory in September,



and von Linsingen had forced the crossing of the Dniester at Nizniiov. On Sunday, the 20th, there was a fierce battle for Rava Russka, and by the evening the Russians had been driven north of the road and railway which connect the town with Lemberg by way of Zolkiev. Late that evening Rava Russka and Zolkiev were in von Mackensen's hands. *June 20.*

The key of Lemberg had been won, and the Grodek position was turned. That night the Russians fell back in good order from the Grodek lakes, and at the same time Brussilov evacuated the ground he had held south of the Dniester between the marshes and the mouth of the Stryj. The Upper Dniester position was obviously untenable, and Halicz was now the western limit of the Russian stand on that river. The centre fell back east of Lemberg to a line between the upper waters of the Bug and the Gnila Lipa, the very position which Dmitrieff had stormed before the capture of the city in September. The way to Lemberg was open, and on the afternoon of Tuesday, 22nd June, the army of Boehm-Ermolli entered without opposition. It was a proud moment for the Austrian general, to whom Germany gave the privilege of first entry. After nine months the capital of Galicia was once more in Austrian hands. *June 22.*

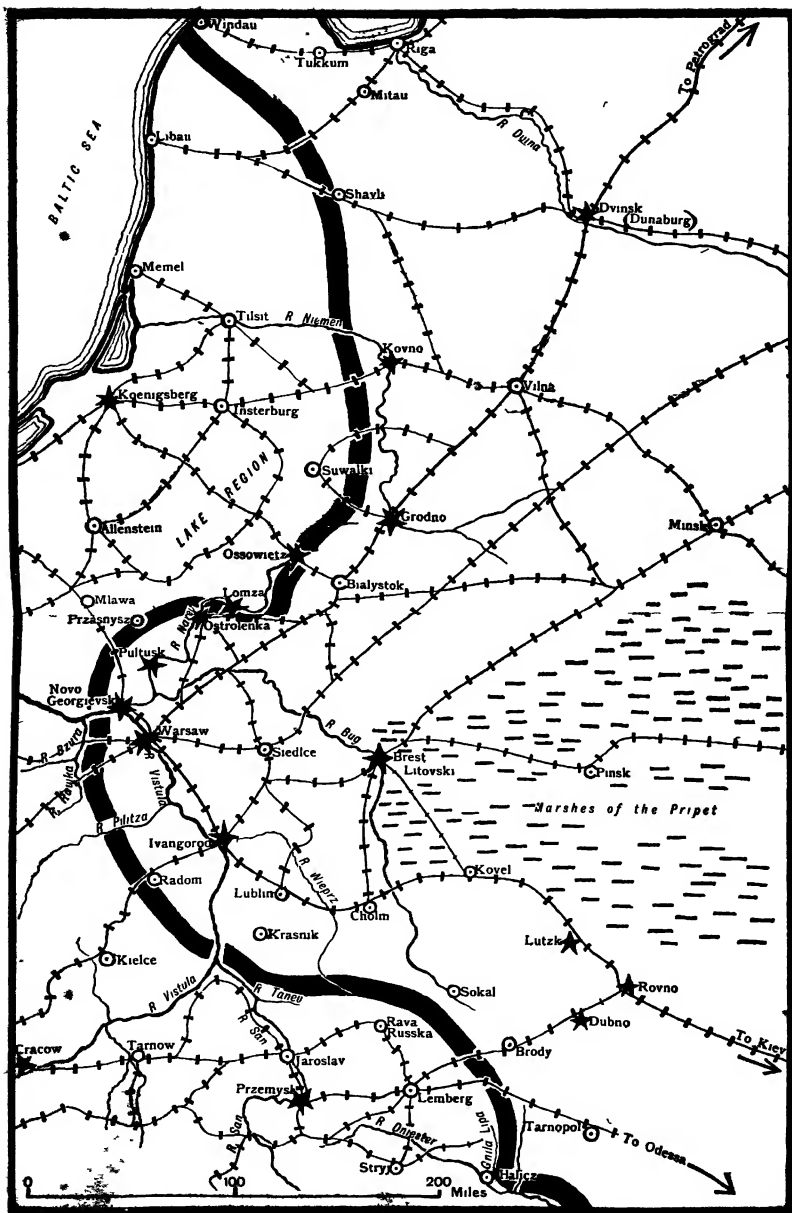
Lemberg was worth a score of Przemyśl both in sentimental and practical value. It controlled a network of lines, and was the last post of a civilized railway system before the Russian frontier was reached with its two barren routes of communication. The Power which held Lemberg held

a strong fortress against any invasion from the east, for it had six lines whereby to bring up supports to one at the disposal of the invader. With the fall of Lemberg the reconquest of Galicia was complete. Let this achievement be set down unservedly to von Mackensen's credit. But, as we have pointed out, territorial reconquest was not his aim. He had not yet shattered the Russian armies. He had not yet split the northern and the southern commands. He had not yet even uncovered Warsaw.

If we take the 21st day of June as a viewpoint, we find Ivanov's forces in the following position.

*June 21.* Ewarts was back near the west bank of the Middle Vistula, running from west of Radom to the junction of the Vistula and the San. He had against him von Woyrsch's army, which made little progress except when assisted by the victories of its right-hand neighbours. The Russian line ran along the east bank of the San and the north bank of the Tanev, and thence south of Zamosc to the valley of the Bug. It left the Bug at Kamionka, and continued due south by Przemyslany and down the Gnila Lipa to Halicz, on the Dniester, whence it followed that river to the Russian frontier. In the seven weeks of fighting it had suffered heavy losses. Dmitrieff's original army of the Donajetz had been much broken, as had also been Brussilov's right wing; but before the San was reached both forces had been renewed by some of the picked corps from Alexeiev's command. We may, therefore, regard the armies which lay in position on 21st June as still strong and unbroken forces, ready for any work to which they might be called. Ever since the San the retreat





The Russian Front after the Fall of Lemberg.



had been premeditated. From before the fall of Przemyśl steps had been taken to prepare positions far in the rear of those held on 21st June. Ivanov knew well that his problem was something very different from the defence of a political frontier.

With the fall of Lemberg the second great stage begins of the Austro-German offensive. The thrust had succeeded brilliantly up to a point, but the cost had been heavy. We shall, perhaps, not be far wrong if we estimate the dead loss of the invaders during the seven weeks' campaign at 400,000 men, and a large part of the winter's accumulation of shells had been shot away. The Austrian troops, even when advancing triumphantly, had fought half-heartedly, and only the German stiffening kept them to their work. Von Mackensen's problem was now not the clearing of territory, but the culminating blow at the heart of the Russian position. Let us be clear as to what this signified.

We have spoken in the past of the Polish salient, the wedge of Russian territory thrust out between Galicia and East Prussia. But there was an inner salient, which was the vital one. Warsaw was at its apex, and the northern side was the railway running by Bialystok and Grodno to Petrograd; the southern was the line by Ivangorod, Lublin, Cholm, Kovel, and Rovno to Kiev. If the northern or southern line were cut Warsaw must fall; if both were pierced, then the whole Russian force must fall back behind the Polish Triangle, and not improbably behind the marshes of Pripet, in which case the two halves would be hopelessly severed. The capture of Lemberg was only an incident in von Mackensen's sudden swing to the north-east; his main

object was an attack upon the Warsaw-Kiev line. Accordingly Ivanov in his retreat saw to it that the railway was covered. He was still not closer to it at any point than fifty miles, and it provided him with what von Mackensen now lacked, a good line of lateral communication.

Meanwhile there had been activity at other parts of the Eastern front. In the middle of May the Germans were in strength on the Dubissa, twenty miles from Kovno. Libau had fallen to them on

*May 9.* 9th May, they had reached the Windawa, and throughout May and early June they made steady progress in the Courland province. They attacked north of Przasnysz towards the Narev

*June 6.* line, and on 6th June they made a violent but ineffective gas assault upon the Rawka position. These attacks were part of a persistent pressure along the whole front to prevent Russia reinforcing her harassed southern command. But the time was drawing nigh when the assault on the southern side of the Polish salient was to be balanced by a no less fierce assault on the north. Not less than forty-one German corps were disposed for this crowning stroke. In the far north, in Courland, there were seven under General von Buelow. On the Niemen there were five in von Eichhorn's 10th Army. Von Gallwitz and von Scholtz on the Narev had seven. In Central Poland, in the forces of Prince Leopold of Bavaria, von Woyrsch and the Archduke Joseph Ferdinand, and in von Mackensen's command, there was the equivalent of fourteen; and under Boehm-Ermolli, von Linsingen, and von Pflanzer there were eight. With the twenty-six Austrian corps which can be

identified, the total force reached the enormous figure of sixty-eight corps—more than two and a half million men.

Russia could produce equal numbers, but she had not the arms, and above all she had not the heavy guns and the shells. Her retreat had taught her that whenever her men could get to grips with the enemy they broke him, but so long as he could determine the battle at long range she was helpless. The situation spurred the Russian people to a mighty effort. Hitherto they had trusted for munitions mainly to foreign imports ; now in their desperate need they set every unit of their sparse industrial machinery to the task of improvisation. Meanwhile far in the south France and Britain were struggling to open a passage to their hard-pressed Ally. We must turn to the difficult campaign in the Dardanelles.



## CHAPTER LV.

### THE STRUGGLE AT GALLIPOLI.

The Position at Gallipoli on 28th April—The Turkish Communications—Exploits of British Submarines in the Sea of Marmora—The Turkish Attack on 1st May—The Allied Counter-attack on 2nd May—The Second Battle of Krithia—Its Results—The Australian Fight at Gaba Tepe—The Third Battle of Krithia—The Nature of the Allied Problem—The Need for Reinforcements—The Work of the Fleets—The Sinking of the *Goliath*—Arrival of the German Submarines—Loss of the *Triumph* and *Majestic*—The Larger Battleships are Withdrawn.

WE left the Allied forces, after the first movement against Krithia on 28th April, extended on a line running from a point on the Gulf of Saros, three miles north-east of Capa Tekke, to a point one mile north of Eski Hissarlik, whence it bent back a little to the shore of the Dardanelles. For the next months the story of the campaign is concerned with a slow and desperate struggle for Krithia and the Achi Baba heights, which were the first step towards the conquest of the peninsula. Before we enter upon the details of that struggle it may be well to glance at the problem of the Turkish communications, for it had a direct bearing upon the Allied strategy of the campaign.

General Liman von Sanders had in the butt-end of the peninsula not less than 200,000 men and a

lavish provision of artillery. To feed his troops and supply his guns he needed ample communications, and these could not be found in the narrow road from Rodosto across the Bulair isthmus, a road bad at the best, and now commanded by the fire of the Allied ships in the Gulf of Saros. His true communications lay by water down the Sea of Marmora to the ports of Gallipoli and Maidos. If this water transport could be hampered, the only remaining plan was to bring his reserves and supplies along the Asiatic coast to Chanak, and have them ferried over in the darkness of the night. This was a practicable route, but slow and circuitous. If he wished for free and speedy transport he must keep the Sea of Marmora inviolate.

It was the object of the Allies to make that Sea impossible. The only means at their disposal was the submarine. An attempt was made by the Australian submarine AE 2, but on 30th April it was unfortunately sunk in a bold effort to enter the Marmora. On 27th April, E 14, under *April 27.* Lieutenant-Commander Edward Courtney Boyle, dived under the mine fields, entered the Marmora, and for some days operated brilliantly in those waters right up to the entrance to the Bosphorus. It was hunted hourly by Turkish patrols; and had many difficulties with currents, but it contrived to sink two Turkish gunboats and one large transport full of troops. A few days later, E 11, under Lieutenant-Commander Eric Naismith, followed the same course, and sunk one large gunboat, two transports, one communication ship, and three store ships, and drove a fourth store ship ashore. It exploded a torpedo right under the

wharves of Constantinople. On its return it was well down the straits when another Turkish transport was discovered astern, and it returned and torpedoed it. It became entangled with a floating mine, and towed the thing behind it to the mouth of the Straits, where it managed to cast it off. These brilliant feats, for which Lieutenant-Commanders Boyle and Naismith received the Victoria Cross, were performed with signal humanity. They involved a prolonged risk and tension which it would be hard to parallel from the annals of war. Their results, too, were singularly fruitful. The Sea of Marmora was no longer regarded as safe, and the Turkish supplies began to travel by the Asiatic shore and the ferries of the Narrows. This involved a certain dislocation and delay which were of inestimable service to the Allied troops which faced the formidable batteries of Achi Baba and Kilid Bahr.

On 30th April two further battalions of the Naval Division disembarked, and next day came the 29th Brigade of Indian Infantry. By *April 30.* that evening the French corps on our right had landed all their troops and all but two of their batteries. These were just in time, for the night had scarcely fallen when the Turks attacked in force. They began with a bombardment, and then, as the moon rose, their infantry charged.

*May 1.* Their German officers had issued an invocation to a counter-crusade :—

“ Attack the enemy with the bayonet and utterly destroy him. We shall not retire one step, for, if we do, our religion, our country, and our nation will perish. Soldiers ! the world is looking at you ! Your only hope of salvation is to bring this battle to a successful issue or gloriously to give up your life in the attempt ! ”

## THE STRUGGLE AT GALLIPOLI. 157

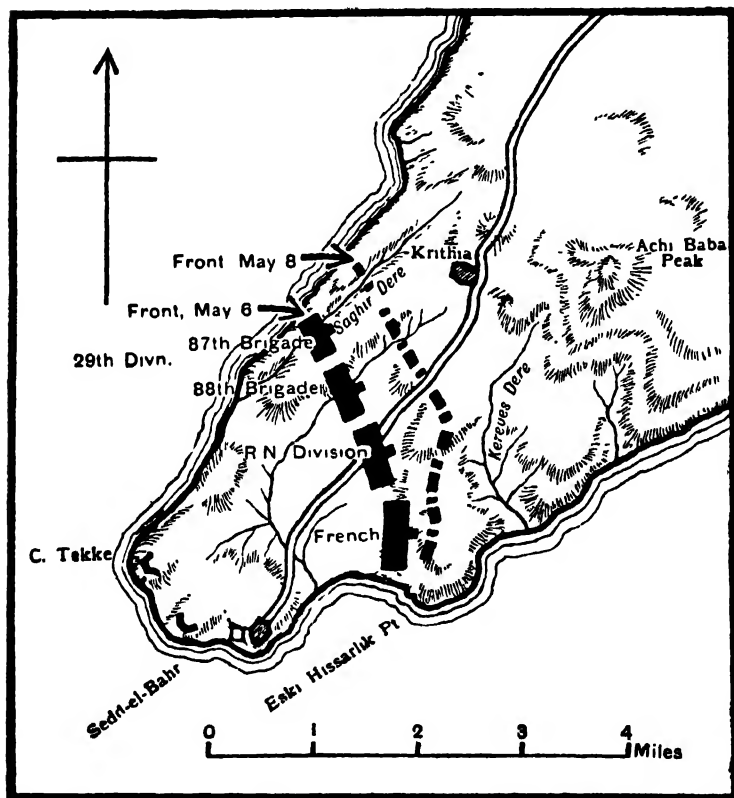
The plan of the attack was for the Turks to crawl forward under cover of their artillery fire till the time came for the final rush. They came on in a three-deep formation, and the first line had no ammunition, so that it might be forced to rely on the bayonet.

The Allied front from left to right was held by the 87th, 86th, and 88th Brigades, and on the right was a French division, with the Senegalese in the first line. The bombardment had fallen most heavily on the right of the 86th Brigade, and this part suffered also the chief impact of the Turkish charge. A gap opened up in our line, which was promptly filled by the 5th Royal Scots, the Territorial battalion of the 88th Brigade. They faced to their left flank, and with the bayonet cleared the enemy from the trenches he had occupied. The 1st Essex came to their assistance, and presently our front was restored.

The attack now swung against the French left, where were the Senegalese. Here ground was lost, and some British gunners and the 4th Worcesters came up in support. All night long we maintained our position here with difficulty, and at two in the morning a battalion of the Naval Division was sent to strengthen the French right.

The counter-attack was ordered for dawn. At 5 a.m. the whole line advanced, and on the British left and centre progressed fully 500 yards. The Senegalese on the French left were able to conform to this movement, in spite of their heavy fighting during the night, but the French right were held up by barbed wire and cunningly-concealed machine guns. The result was

that the advance was enfiladed upon the right, and about 11 a.m. had to withdraw to its former line. At one moment the Turkish retirement looked like a rout, and Sir Ian Hamilton was of opinion that



— . Attack on the Krithia-Achi Baba Position, May 6-8.

but for the barbed wire and the machine guns on the right we should have carried Achi Baba.

That afternoon the enemy buried his dead under a flag of truce. In the evening the French front

was again assailed, and the following night the attack was repeated and repulsed. On the 4th, part of the French line was taken over by the 2nd Naval Brigade, and on the 5th the East Lancashire Territorial Division arrived, and was added to the reserves. Since the 25th of April the British losses had been just short of 14,000, of whom no less than 3,593 were prisoners. In attack in such a country, where the movement is not uniform, troops which lead the advance are in great danger of being cut off. From the 3rd to the 5th we were busy readjusting our line in preparation for a fresh offensive.

What may be called the Second Battle of Krithia began on the morning of Thursday, 6th May, and lasted for three days. The Allied positions at the beginning of the action were as follows:—On the extreme left the 87th Brigade held the hollow, down which a small stream flows to Beach Y, and was entrenched on the heights above it. Then came the 88th Brigade and a Naval Brigade, and then the French to the Straits. In reserve were the 86th Brigade, the 29th Indian Brigade, a brigade of Australians and New Zealanders brought down from Gaba Tepe, and the East Lancashire Territorial Division. Our plan of attack was for the left and centre to attempt to occupy the Krithia ridge, while the French should assault the high ground on the right across the valley of the Kereves Dere—the small stream which enters the Dardanelles just beyond Eski Hissarlik. The French were to begin the movement, since, until they had made some progress, the British advance on Krithia would be enfiladed by the Turkish left.

The French 75-mm. guns opened fire from the neighbourhood of Sedd-el-Bahr about eleven in the morning, aiming at the southern spur of Achi Baba and the broken ground in front of it towards the Krithia road. At the same time the battleships in the Straits, among which were the *Agamemnon*, plastered the upper slopes of Achi Baba and the Turkish trenches in the Kereves valley. After half an hour of artillery preparation the Senegalese attacked in open order, while their field guns dropped shells fifty yards in front of them. As they reached the top of the slope overlooking the Kereves Dere they came suddenly upon Turkish trenches skilfully concealed behind the crest. This compelled part of the line to wheel to the left, where they advanced by a bridle path which traverses the upper end of the Kereves hollow. Part of the Naval Brigade was sent forward to reinforce the French left, but they too fell in with concealed Turkish trenches. The ships' guns and the French field artillery rained shrapnel and high-explosive shells on the Turkish position, but could not check its fire. Again and again through the afternoon the Senegalese struggled to advance, but the place was too strong, and with heavy casualties they had to be withdrawn and their place taken by a brigade of Colonial infantry. At 5.30 p.m. the fighting died away. The result of the day was that the French had pushed forward a mile, and had dug themselves in on the slopes above the Kereves Dere, but had failed to carry the Turkish trenches on the reverse slope or the redoubt at the top of the valley. That night the Turks counter-attacked between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m., but the French held their ground.

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Next day, 7th May, about ten o'clock, the ships began a bombardment of the Turkish right on Achi Baba. They directed special *May 7.* attention to the ground at the head of the ravine leading to Beach Y. A quarter of an hour later the British left attacked, the 87th and 88th Brigades towards the slopes between Krithia and the sea, and the Naval Brigades in the centre towards Krithia village. They carried the front Turkish trenches, but the second line held them up, and their supports were heavily shelled by Turkish guns from the heights. One battalion got well ahead of the rest, but at 1.45 p.m. was caught by machine-gun fire, and forced to retreat. By 2 p.m. we seemed to have reached an *impasse*.

Meantime the French on the right had lain quiet till noon. Then they began an elaborate bombardment, and at 3 p.m., supported by part of the Naval Brigade, attacked over the same ground as the day before. During the afternoon they made some progress, but about 5 p.m. their advanced infantry was caught on the slopes by such a hail of shrapnel that the line wavered and broke. The Turks counter-attacked and took the French trenches on the crest. D'Amade flung in his reserves, and after an hour's severe fighting they recovered the lost ground, and held it till nightfall under a heavy fire.

During the afternoon the British had done little. At 3.15 p.m. we strengthened our left, and at five a second time bombarded the Turkish position. Our infantry advanced, and about six attempted to carry the hill between Krithia and the sea. It proved too strong, but as a result of the day we had got our front entrenched within 800 yards of



Krithia. It was desperately costly fighting. Our artillery fire seemed to have no effect upon the enemy, who had trench lines cunningly hidden over the whole position.

Next day, 8th May, the battle was renewed at ten o'clock. Again the ships in the Gulf of Saros

*May 8.* bombarded the Turkish right and the ground behind it, and after half an hour's "preparation" the British left and left centre attacked. The 87th and 88th Brigades gained further ground in the broken bush country between Krithia and the sea. The 86th Brigade and the Australian and New Zealand supports were then pushed in to strengthen the line. Nothing happened on the right of our front, and during the afternoon there was a lull. We were reorganizing our forces, with a view to a last attempt upon Krithia valley.

At 5.15 p.m. all the available ships and the shore batteries united in a terrific bombardment. From the report of an observer, the Turkish position was smothered in flame and smoke. "According to all preconceived theories of artillery fire, the enemy should have been wiped out and so stunned by the exploding lyddite that he would not be capable of resisting the advance of our infantry. Not a Turk was to be seen, and their artillery had not fired a shot." Once again we were to learn the strength of scientifically-prepared entrenchments. At 5.30 our advance began, and no sooner did we move than the Turks opened fire along the whole front with artillery, machine guns, and rifles. On the left we moved a little way towards Krithia, but soon reached our limit. The French on the right

## THE STRUGGLE AT GALLIPOLI.\* 163

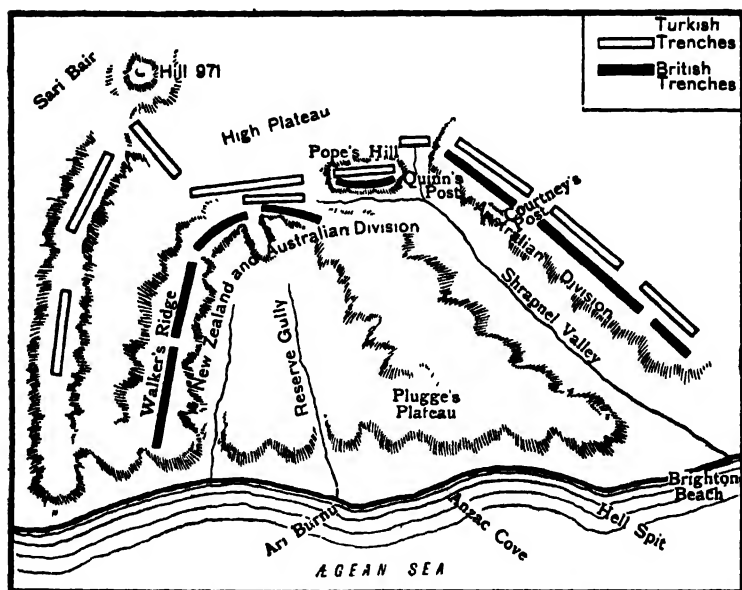
carried the first Turkish trenches, and there stuck fast. Confused fighting continued till 7.30 p.m., when night put an end to the battle.

The result of the three days' struggle was that our front had been advanced over a thousand yards, but we had not touched the enemy's main position. We had realized its unique strength, and all idea of rushing it was abandoned.

We must turn to the doings of the Australasian corps\* at Gaba Tepe. During the battles of 6th–8th May they were persistently attacked; but, though they had lent part of their forces to the Krithia front, they held their ground at all points. On the morning of 9th May the 15th and 16th Battalions of the 4th Australian Brigade *May 9.* stormed with the bayonet three lines of trenches on Sari Bair. Next day, at dawn, the Turks counter-attacked and retook the trenches, *May 10.* but were repulsed with heavy losses when they continued their attack against the main Australian position. After that nothing of importance occurred till the night of 18th May. The Australian line lay in a semicircle, with the enemy's trenches close up to it—in some places *May 18.* as near as twenty yards—except in that part adjoining the shore where the ships' guns kept him off. A wide hollow, which our men called Shrapnel Valley, divided the position into two sections. On the northern section the Turkish trenches were on

\* This corps comprised the Australian Division (General Bridges)—1st, 2nd, and 3rd Australian Infantry Brigades; the New Zealand and Australian Division (General Godley)—4th Australian Brigade, New Zealand Brigade, and Composite Mounted Brigade.

much higher ground than ours. The curious alignment may be seen from the attached sketch, which gives a rough plan of the main situation. Our position at Gaba Tepe was of great strategical value, for it divided the enemy's efforts. He could not attack or defend at Achi Baba in full force, since



Position of Australian and New Zealand Corps at Gaba Tepe.

he was compelled to leave a large part of his army to hold the Australian corps.

On the night of 18th May General Liman von Sanders brought fresh troops from Constantinople, and drew off part of his Krithia garrison. About midnight a heavy fire from rifle and machine guns broke out against the Australian trenches, and at various points attacks were made which crumbled

away before our defence. At 5 a.m. on the 19th the Turkish artillery began, and all morning the enemy attempted to rush our lines. *May 19.* The cool and steady shooting of the Australians kept him at bay, and by eleven o'clock the battle died down. In the evening there were renewed attacks, in one of which Lance-Corporal Jacka of the 14th Battalion retook a trench occupied by seven Turks, killing all seven single-handed—a deed for which he received the Victoria Cross. On that day, the 19th, the Turks were believed to have lost over 7,000 men, while the casualties of the Australians were only some 500. An observer who saw the action thus described the field:—"The ground presents an extraordinary sight when viewed through the trench periscopes. Two hundred yards away, and even closer in places, are the Turkish trenches, and between them and our lines the dead lie in hundreds. There are groups of twenty or thirty massed together as if for mutual protection, some lying on their faces, some killed in the act of firing, others hung up in the barbed wire. In one place a small group actually reached our parapet, and now lie dead on it, shot or bayoneted at point-blank range. Hundreds of others lie just outside their own trenches."

To return to the main front in the south. Little happened between 9th and 12th May. On the night of the 12th Major-General Hunter-Weston, with some troops of the 29th *May 12.* Division and a double company of Gurkhas, operating close to the sea, drove in the extreme Turkish right, and won some ground. *May 17.* On the 17th the 29th Division advanced their

trenches 200 yards, and next day the French on the right, supported by a Naval Brigade, made some progress. During the following fortnight there was nothing to record, except small local advances. On

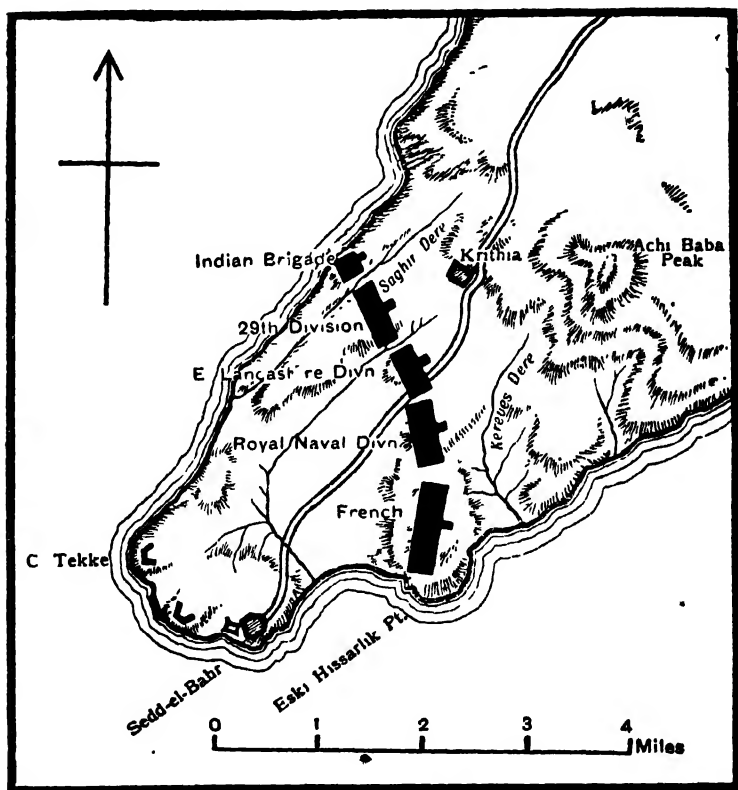
*May 28.* the night of 28th May the Turks had a slight success, and advanced in some force to press it further. But our guns caught their supports, and demoralized them, and their bombers threw their grenades into their own first-line trenches. The Turkish casualties were estimated at about 2,000. That same night the French carried the redoubt, which they had named "Le Haricot," at the head of the Kereves Dere, that same redoubt which had held up their advance with its machine guns in the battle of 6th-8th May.

The third great attempt upon Krithia and Achi Baba was made on 4th June. Our front was formed

*June 4.* by the 29th Indian Brigade on the left, the 29th Division on the left centre, the East Lancashire Territorial Division in the centre, the Naval Division on the right centre, and the French 2nd Division on the right. After a preparation by all our shore batteries and ships' guns, the advance began at noon. The Indian Brigade at first made good progress, and captured two lines of trenches. Unfortunately, on their right a part of the 29th Division had found itself faced with a heavy wire entanglement which our artillery had not cut. This checked their progress, and the Indians were compelled by enfilading fire to retire to their original line. The rest of the 29th Division captured a redoubt and two trench lines beyond it, and advanced the front by 300 yards. The Territorials in the centre captured three lines of trenches, and

## THE STRUGGLE AT GALLIPOLI. 167

advanced 600 yards, but they were too far beyond the rest for comfort, and after holding an advanced captured trench for a day and a night, had to fall back to the second trench. The Naval Division



.Attack on the Krithia-Achi Baba Position, June 4.

progressed for 300 yards, taking a redoubt and a line of trenches, but was obliged to yield its gains owing to the position on its right. There the French, charging with desperate gallantry, retook for the

fourth time the redoubt of "Le Haricot," but were driven out of it by shell fire. Their right was more fortunate, and captured a strong trench line, which they were able to hold.

There were many counter-attacks during the night, which forced us out of one of the captured trenches. At the same time General Birdwood attacked from Gaba Tepe, in order to divert reinforcements which were coming from Maidos, and carried a trench line, inflicting heavy losses upon the enemy. The fruits of this third attempt on Achi Baba were an advance of some 500 yards on a front of three miles, and the occupation of two lines of Turkish trenches.

It was after the battle of 4th June that the need for large reinforcements became too urgent to be denied. After five weeks' struggle, in which the fighting had been as desperate as any in the war, we had not yet touched the outer Turkish position. The German engineers had turned the *terrain* to brilliant defensive uses, and even when long lengths of trenches were carried by our infantry attacks, there remained redoubts, like the *fortins* on the Western front, to make a general advance impossible. It may be questioned whether a more abundant supply of high explosives would have greatly altered the case. Our bombardments had been lavish enough, but they had scarcely touched the enemy. The Gallipoli campaign had revealed itself as a slow and deadly frontal attack, in which yard by yard we should have to fight our way across the ridges.

Such warfare was costly beyond all reckoning. Up to 31st May the casualties\* in the Dardanelles—exclusive of the French—

## THE STRUGGLE AT GALLIPOLI, 169

reached a total of 38,636, of whom 1,722 were officers. The battle losses for the three years of the South African War were only 38,156. This figure, it will be noted, covers only the landing and the first two attempts on Achi Baba. The Turkish losses were estimated at some 60,000.

The Allied Fleets had shared in every land attack, and the *Goeben*, on the Turkish side, from farther up the Straits, took part in at least one engagement. These large vessels, stationary or moving very slowly along the coasts, were a superb target for under-water assault, and presently news came that some of the large ocean-going German submarines, which had been commissioned early in the year, were on their way to the Mediterranean. About the middle of May one was reported near Malta, and there were many spots on the long indented Anatolian coast where they could find a base.

This possibility gave much anxiety to the Allied admirals. Meantime, on the night of 12th May, a Turkish destroyer performed a singularly bold feat on its own account. It *May 12.* found the old British battleship, the *Goliath*,\* protecting the French flank just inside the Straits, sunk it by torpedo fire, with a loss of the captain, 19 officers, and 500 men, and managed to return safely. Such an exploit was only possible under cover of darkness, and the risk of it did not interfere with the daylight operations of the fleet. But presently a far more formidable foe arrived, a foe whose pres-

\* Built in 1900. 12,950 tons, 19 knots, four 12-in. and twelve 6-in. guns.



ence made naval support—so far at least as concerned the great battleships—a very doubtful and costly undertaking.

About midday on 26th May the *Triumph* was moving slowly up the northern shore of the peninsula in support of the Australasian troops.

May 26. Apparently her nets were out, and there were destroyers close at hand. A torpedo from a German submarine tore through the nets, struck the vessel amidships, and sank her in nine minutes. Nearly all the officers and men were saved, and the submarine was chased unsuccessfully by the destroyers. Here was an incident to give serious thought. The enemy in broad daylight, in water full of shipping, had broken through all our safeguards, and destroyed a battleship. The hunt for the submarine—there seems at the moment to have been only one—was vigorously conducted, but nothing was heard of it till next day,

May 27. when the *Majestic*, steaming very close to the shore, was sunk in the same fashion.

The Allied Fleets, compelled by the necessities of gunnery to move slowly, were obviously at the mercy of an enemy under water. From this date, therefore, the larger vessels began to withdraw. The *Queen Elizabeth* returned home, and there remained only a few of the older battleships, a number of cruisers, French and British, like the *Euryalus*, *Minerva*, *Talbot*, *Phaeton*, *Amethyst*, and *Kleber*; and a flotilla of destroyers, including the *Scorpion*, *Wolverine*, *Pincher*, *Renard*, and *Chelmer*. In addition we had the *Humber*, one of the monitors which had operated in October off the Flanders coast—a type of vessel whose shallow draught made

## THE STRUGGLE AT GALLIPOLI. 171

it most suitable for coast bombardment and least vulnerable to submarine attack.

The strength of the Gallipoli position and the menace of the German submarines had turned the operations in the Eastern Mediterranean into some of the most difficult of the war. Farther west the situation was brighter. Two days before *May 24.* the *Triumph* went down, the shores of the Adriatic had seen the opening of Italy's campaign.

## CHAPTER LVI.

### THE BEGINNING OF ITALY'S CAMPAIGN.

The Military Strength of Italy—The Italian Army—The Italian Navy—General Cadorna—The Duke of the Abruzzi—The Italian-Austrian Frontier—The Trentino—The Carnic Alps—The Isonzo—The Railway Communications—Italian Strategical Necessities—Napoleon in 1797—The War of 1866—The Austrian Raid on the Italian Coast—The Austrian Plan—The Advance to the Isonzo—The Fight for the Dolomite Passes—Fighting in the Trentino—The Campaign up to the End of May.

A PARALLEL might be drawn between the antecedents of the Italian kingdom and those of the modern German Empire. Both in their present form were less than half a century old. Both had been built up round the nucleus of a long-descended monarchy, and the House of Savoy had curious points of kinship with the House of Hohenzollern. Its rulers ascended from being Counts of Savoy to being Kings of Sardinia and then Kings of Italy, as the Hohenzollerns were first Electors of Brandenburg, then Kings of Prussia, and then German Emperors. William II. of Germany and Victor Emmanuel III. of Italy were each the third of their line to hold their high positions.

But the military strength of the two states had not developed on the same lines Italy's problem

## BEGINNING OF ITALY'S CAMPAIGN. 173

since 1870 had been one of peculiar difficulty. Her creation as a kingdom had left her with an unsatisfactory northern frontier. The additions of Lombardy and Venetia to the dominions of Savoy had been acquired less by overmastering victories in the field than by the diplomatic difficulties in which Austria found herself at the moment. The French victories in 1859 were discounted by the Emperor Napoleon's divided aims, and Venetia was ceded because of the Prussian victory at Sadowa, though Austria had been successful in her Italian campaign. In their acquisition, therefore, Italy exhausted her purchase; the situation was too delicate to insist upon that rectification of boundaries which would have made them secure. All the Alpine passes and all the crossings of the Isonzo were left in Austrian hands. Accordingly for fifty years she had rarely been free from anxiety about the north. Again, her population was from the military point of view curiously heterogeneous. Districts differed in their military value as widely as Sparta differed from Corinth. These circumstances—the overwhelming strategic importance of the north and the mixed character of the recruits—made it impossible to follow the German plan of an army on a territorial basis. A regiment was recruited from all parts of the country, but on mobilization reservists joined that regiment which happened to be quartered in their district. In time of war, therefore, about half of those serving had no previous connection with the units in which they served.

Service was universal and compulsory, and the liability began at the age of twenty, and lasted for nineteen years. Recruits were divided into three

classes. The first formed the first line ; the second were also regulars, but with unlimited leave ; while the third passed into the Territorial militia. The second class—corresponding to the German Ersatz Reserve—received a few months' annual training for eight years, and then passed into the Mobile Militia and the Territorial Militia. The third class received only thirty days' annual training. The first class—the first line of the regular army—served for two years with the colours, six in the Reserve, four in the Mobile Militia, and the remaining seven in the Territorial Militia.

The unit of organization was the army corps, which consisted normally of two divisions. Each division comprised two brigades of infantry and a regiment—five batteries—of field artillery. A brigade contained two regiments, and a regiment three battalions. The peace establishment showed twelve army corps, half of which had their stations near the northern frontier.\* A cavalry division consisted of two brigades of two regiments each, and two batteries of horse artillery. There were twenty-nine cavalry regiments on the peace establishment. The light infantry was the Bersaglieri, corresponding to the French Chasseurs and the German Jaegers. A regiment of four Bersaglieri battalions—three of infantry and one of cyclists—was part of each army corps. Two other formations must be noted. The six battalions of the Carabinieri were a force of military police, selected from

\* I. Corps, Turin ; II., Alessandria ; III., Milan ; IV., Genoa ; V., Verona ; VI., Bologna ; VII., Ancona ; VIII., Florence ; IX., Rome (three divisions) ; X., Naples ; XI., Bari ; XII., Palermo.

## BEGINNING OF ITALY'S CAMPAIGN. 175

the regular army. The Alpini—twenty-six battalions of the first line, organized in eight regiments, with thirty-six batteries of mountain artillery—were special frontier troops for the defence of the northern borders. The line regiments suffered to some extent from the best men being taken for the picked corps of Carabinieri, Bersaglieri, and Alpini.

The peace strength of the army of Italy in the year before the war was approximately 15,000 officers and 290,000 other ranks. On mobilization a division of Mobile Militia was added to each corps, bringing up its strength to 37,000 men and 134 guns. The war strength was approximately 700,000 in the first line—that is, from the two classes of the regular army—and 320,000 in the Mobile Militia, with a reservoir of something over 2,000,000 in the Territorial Militia. Italy's field force might, therefore, be reckoned at something over 1,000,000 trained men. Her field artillery was armed with a 75-mm. gun, and she had a large number of batteries of Krupp howitzers, and a siege train of very high calibre. So far as can be judged, she organized her war strength in fourteen first-line corps.

The Italian Commander-in-Chief was King Victor Emmanuel, a monarch whose gallantry and straightforward simplicity had won him a high degree of popular confidence. The Chief of the General Staff and the Generalissimo in the field was General Count Luigi Cadorna, a native of Pallanza, and a man of sixty-five at the outbreak of war. He was the son of that Rafaele Cadorna who, in September 1870, led the Italian army into Papal territory and blew in the Porta Pia. He had served on his father's staff during that expedition, had

commanded the 10th Bersaglieri, and had been a corps commander at Genoa. He succeeded General Pollio in 1914 as Chief of the General Staff. He had won fame throughout Europe as a writer on military science, and he had a unique knowledge of the *terrain* of the coming war. As von Hindenburg had studied the East Prussian bogs, so had General Cadorna mastered the intricacies of Italy's northern frontier.

A word must be added on the Italian navy, which now took over from France the task of holding Austria in the Adriatic. It contained four Dreadnoughts, and two more were on the verge of completion. These ships were all armed with 12-inch guns. It possessed also ten pre-Dreadnought battleships and a number of older vessels. Its armoured cruisers were none of them faster than 22 knots, but it contained three very fast light cruisers, as well as twenty submarines, a large number of torpedo boats, and forty destroyers. At the lowest computation it showed a considerable superiority over the fleet of Austria-Hungary. The Admiral-in-Chief was the first cousin of the King, the Duke of the Abruzzi, perhaps, after the Grand Duke Nicholas, the most brilliant member of any reigning house in the world. A man of forty-two, he had won fame as an explorer, a mountaineer, and a scientific geographer. He had shown extraordinary skill in organizing expeditions in the most difficult latitudes from Alaskan and Himalayan snows to the mountain jungles of Ruwenzori, and in the Tripoli War had commanded with distinction a division of the Italian fleet.

The strategic position of Italy was disadvanta-







The Austro-Italian Theatre of War.



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geous, as we shall presently see ; but she began the war with two assets. In the first place, both her army and navy had had recent fighting experience. For nearly a generation her colonial adventures had involved her in small campaigns on the Red Sea littoral, and the disaster of Adowa was fruitful in its teaching. Her Tripoli War had given her much difficult fighting, but it had afforded invaluable experience to her officers. The transport work which it entailed and her bombardments and blockades in the Ægean had kept the fleet in good practice. In the second place, she did not begin her campaign till nine months and more after the first shots had been fired in Flanders. All through the winter she was busy equipping her army, and remodelling it in the light of the lessons which the campaign revealed. The German strength in artillery and machine guns, with all its consequences, was patent to her ; she could draw upon the experience of both sides in the winter war of attrition ; and she could revise and bring up to date at her leisure her military preconceptions. Her position as a spectator was of incalculable advantage, and it was reasonable to assume that she would begin with a stock of knowledge which the other combatants had only acquired at a desperate cost.

The strategy of General Cadorna was determined by hard geographical facts, and it is necessary to examine in detail the configuration of the Italian-Austrian frontier. It has a length of about 480 miles, and the map will show that it is divided naturally into three parts—the re-entrant angle of the Trentino ; the great wall of the Dolomites, the Carnic and the Julian Alps ; and the space on the

east between the main Alpine chain and the Adriatic. The Trentino forms a salient the sides of which are mountain buttresses. It is drained towards the Po by the Adige and the Sarca, which flows into Lake Garda. An enemy attempting its conquest must advance principally by the Adige valley, and would presently find himself confronted with the strongly fortified town of Trent, which in the Middle Ages so long defied the attacks of Venice. If Trent were safely passed, he would struggle for long in a wilderness of lateral valleys, and would still have to force the main ridge of the chain at the Brenner. Now, a salient may be a cause of weakness in war, as Russia found in Western Poland, for it is open to assault on both flanks. But the containing walls of the Trentino make flank attacks all but impossible. On the western side, high up in the hills, is the Stelvio Pass, leading from the Upper Adige to the vale of the Adda. Over this pass in March 1799 Dessolles led the army of Italy. But it is the loftiest carriage pass in the Alps, more than 9,000 feet high, and even if a modern army could win its strait defiles it would find itself in a lateral valley, with many difficulties before it ere it reached Bozen and the main road to the north. Going south, we find the Tonale Pass, south of the Ortler *massif*, which carries the road from the Noce to the Oglio; but for a great army that is no better. Close to Lake Garda is the road pass of Cornelle, too narrow in its debouchments for any considerable force. On the eastern side of the salient the conditions are still worse for invasion. The railway from Venice to Innsbruck crosses the Valsugana at Tesse, but the Brenta valley which it traverses gives







## BEGINNING OF ITALY'S CAMPAIGN. 179

a difficult road to Trent. Further north the road passes from Caprile to Campitello leads into the defiles of the Dwarf King's Rose-garden—a possible passage, for these passes of the Western Dolomites are bare and open, but one useless for an invader, since the road bends away to Bozen, and there is no route north to the Pusterthal. The salient of the Trentino is a fine offensive and defensive position for those who hold it. It is a hollow headland of mountain jutting into the plains, and it is hard for the plain-dwellers to pierce its rim. The deep hollow of the Lake of Garda is no real opening in the barrier. The breach, so far from weakening the defence, is in reality a source of strength, for it compels an attack from the Italian plain to be made on divergent lines from different bases, east and west of the lake.

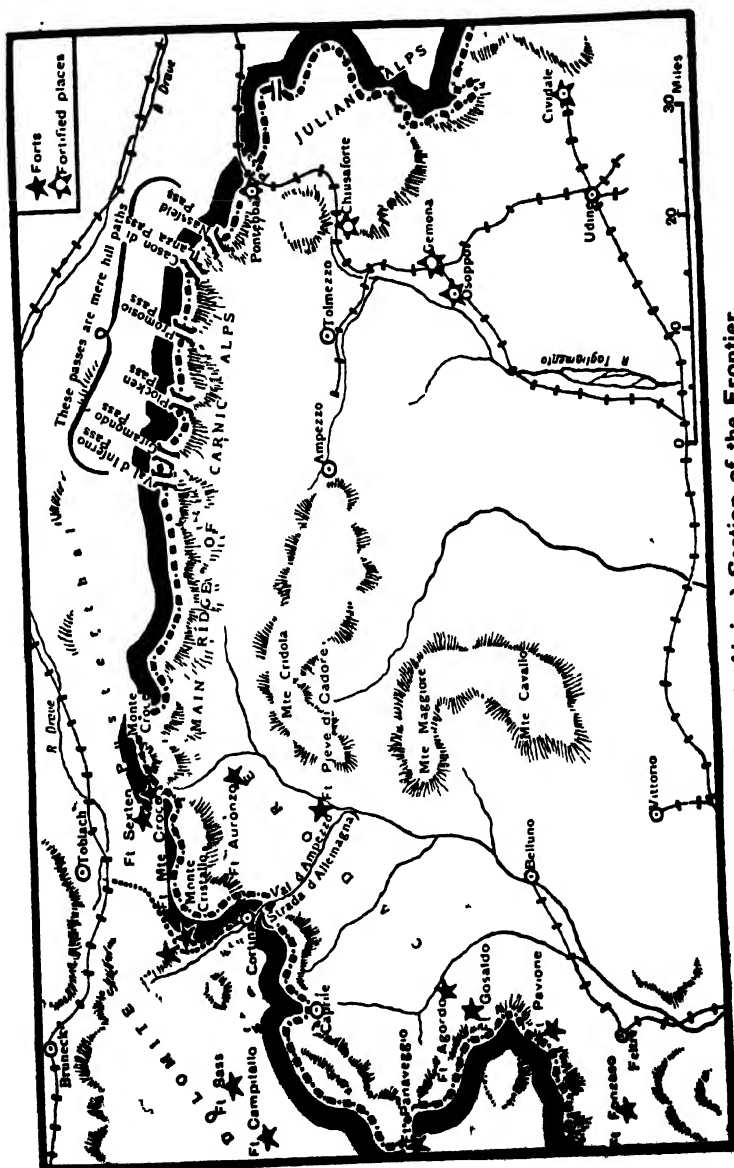
The second part is a shallow arc of sheer rampart—the Dolomite and Carnic ranges. The main pass is that of Ampezzo, where the great highroad known as the Strada d'Alemagna runs from Belluno to Toblach through the heart of the white limestone crags at an altitude of little over 5,000 feet. But between Cortina and Toblach it makes a sharp detour westward to circumvent the mass of Cristallo, and that part is no better than a defile commanded by a hundred danger points. The adjacent passes of Misurina and Monte Croce are no better, and as we go east the Val d'Inferno and the Plocken are only bridle paths. The main pass in the chain is that which leads from the valley of the Fella by Pontebbo to the upper streams of the Drave. It carries the railway from Venice to Vienna, and its highest point is only 2,615 feet. It was the old highroad



of invasion from the north ; but, though the easiest of the great routes, it is still narrow and difficult, a gate which a modern army should with ease be able to close and hold. South-east of it among the buttresses of the Julian Alps there is no pass of any military value.

The third section of the frontier—the low ground between Cividale and the sea—is not the natural avenue of movement which small-scale maps would suggest. It is a narrow front, less than twenty miles wide, and behind it is the line of the river Isonzo, with hills along its eastern bank. The upper part of the stream above Salcana is a ravine ; then come six miles of plain in front of Gorizia ; then the hills begin again and sweep round to the sea-coast by Monfalcone. The value of such a position for the defence is obvious. A strong field force with a full complement of artillery could make of the Isonzo a front as impregnable as any river line in Europe.

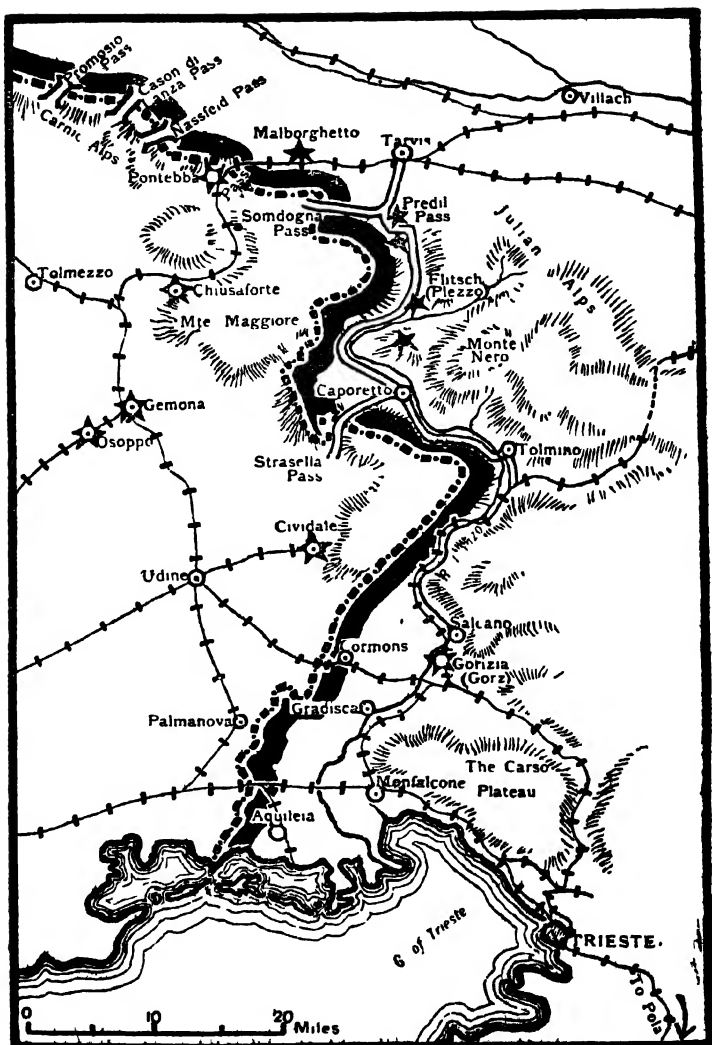
For a modern army the natural strength of a position is not enough ; there must be adequate lateral communications. In this respect Italy had the advantage, for she had the elaborate railway system of her northern plains behind her, while Austria had only the restricted railways of mountain valleys. The main Italian line runs from Verona by Vicenza and Treviso to Udine. It sends off numerous branches up to the base of the hills—from Verona up the Adige, from Vicenza to Torrelvicino, from Cittadella to the Valsugana, from Treviso up the Piave to Belluno, from S. Vito to Pontebba, and from Udine to Cividale. It is backed by a coast railway, and between the two there are



## 2. The Central (Alpine) Section of the Frontier.

many connecting branches. Austria possessed a railway system running round the whole half-moon of frontier, but it had few feeders, for the hill valleys in which it ran made branches difficult. From west to east it ran from the point of the Trentino salient by Trent and Bozen to Franzenfeste, then east along the Pusterthal by Lienz and Spittal to Villach. It then bent back from the frontier, ran down the Upper Save, rounded the *massif* of Monte Nero, and descended to Gorizia, where it connected by two routes with Trieste. This encircling line was well fed from its main bases, like Innsbruck, Salzburg, Vienna, and Trieste, but it sent off very few branches to the edge of the frontier. One ran from Trent to the Valsugana; after that there was nothing for 150 miles till Tarvis was reached, when the Pontebba line began. Branches went west for Gorizia to Udine, and from Monfalcone to San Giorgio, and these four were the only feeders on the Austrian side of the hills.

This paucity of branch lines meant that the Austrian offensive must concentrate at certain definite places—Trent, Tarvis, and Gorizia. It meant conversely that an Italian offensive must aim at the same points and at one more. This was Franzenfeste, the junction of the Pusterthal line with that which runs from Innsbruck to Trent. If that point could be taken the communications of the whole of the Trentino salient would be cut. Unfortunately for Italy, this nodal point of Franzenfeste was just the one which it was hardest to reach, for south and east of it was the whole complex system of the Dolomites. The long space without branch lines was as awkward for the one offensive as for the



3. The Isonzo Frontier and the Defences of the Julian Alps.

other. What seemed a lengthy and precarious line of communication was in reality defended by an almost insuperable mountain wall.

The problem before General Cadorna was, therefore, by no means simple. Austria had her hands full in the Carpathians, and it was unlikely that she would be able to take that swift offensive for which her frontier had been designed. It was a sovereign chance for an Italian forward movement, and the direction of that movement was not in doubt. It must be mainly towards Trieste, the Istrian peninsula, and the wooded hills of Styria which sweep to Vienna. There Austria was most vulnerable, and there lay a *terrain* where modern armies could manœuvre. But the configuration of the frontier made it impossible for a commander to direct all his forces upon one section. The whole northern border must be watched and held, else Austria from the Trentino salient might cut his communications and take him in the rear. Accordingly he resolved to attack at all the salient points—towards Trent, across the Dolomite passes against the Pusterthal railway, at the Pontebba Pass, across the Julian buttresses in order to threaten the Tarvis-Gorizia line. Such a series of movements would keep the enemy busy and prevent any flanking strategy. And meantime with his chief army he would strike at the Isonzo and the road to Trieste.

The military history of that frontier during the past century is an exposition of the difficulties which General Cadorna was now called upon to face. In

1797. 1797 Napoleon, having overrun Northern Italy the year before, resolved to force Austria to sue for peace by a threat against

## BEGINNING OF ITALY'S CAMPAIGN.\*185

Vienna. He marched what we would now call a small army into Carinthia, where the country was open and defenceless. Austria had no adequate force with which to oppose him, and an armistice was concluded when he reached Klagenfurt. It was an easy victory, but the point to note is that he did not dare to cross the eastern frontier till he had pushed forward an army as strong as his own from Verona to Trent to protect his rear and his communications. The campaign of 1866 showed the strength of the Trentino position. 1866.

In that year the Austrian commander, General Kuhn, left only small detachments to guard the passes, and kept his main force at Trent, which he made the pivot of his defence. He easily defeated the Garibaldian columns which attacked on both sides of the Lake of Garda and by the Tonale Pass. The main Italian advance was made from Padua up the Brenta valley, and this was not seriously opposed till it was near the watershed. There Kuhn was waiting with his reserves; but the action was never fought, since the first shots had scarcely been fired when news came that an armistice had been signed at Vienna. But it was the general impression at the time that if the forces had been engaged, Kuhn would have held his own. From the first he had been greatly outnumbered, but, thanks to his central position, he was always able to secure a local superiority against attacks made from widely divergent points.

At that time, it must be remembered, the passes were not fortified, for the simple reason that Venetia had been Austrian territory for half a century, and the Trentino border was not a state frontier. Trent,

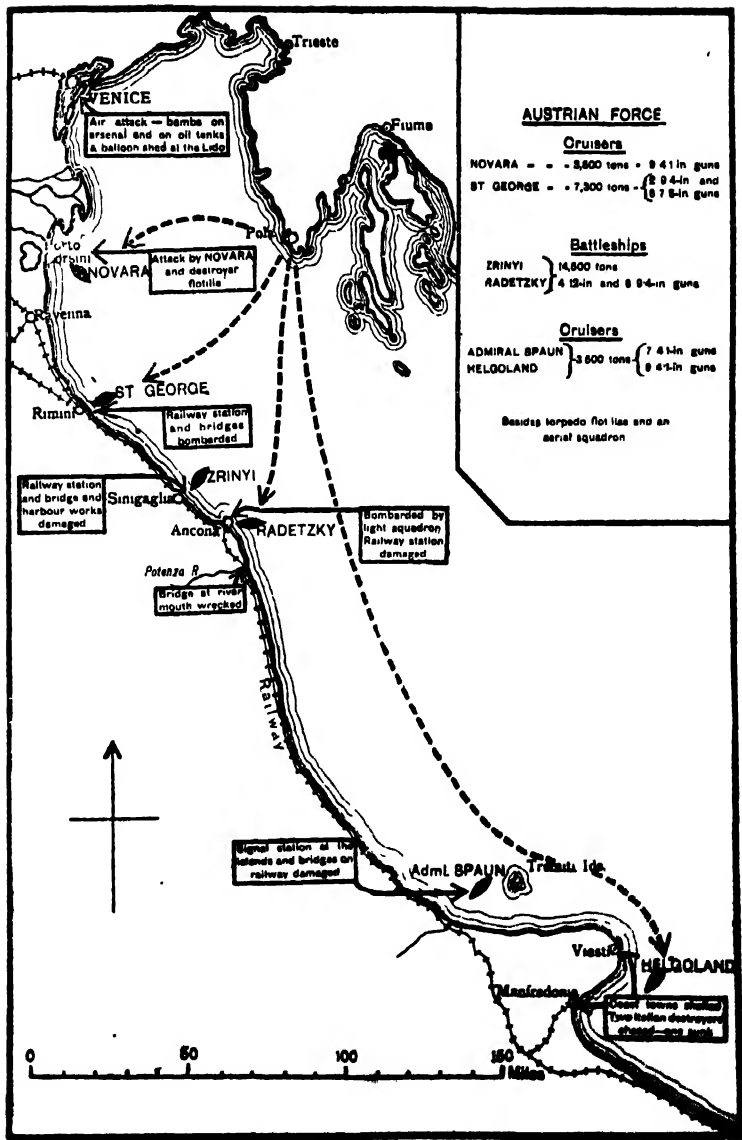
too, was then an open town. Now the conditions were more favourable for the defence. An Italian army attacking the Trentino would have to fight its way up narrow valleys, all of which converged upon Trent, the central fortress. The defence would, therefore, be able to mass its reserves for a counter-attack against one line of advance after another, and need not strike till the invaders had already suffered heavily in breaking down the advanced fortifications of the passes.

War began, as we have seen, on 23rd May, and the first serious blow was struck by Austria. This

*May 23.* was a well-organized raid on the Adriatic coast, the object of which was to delay the Italian concentration by damaging vital points on the coast railway from Brindisi to the north. The attack began a little after four on the morning of Monday, 24th May, and was carried out by a

*May 24.* squadron from Pola made up of two battleships, four cruisers, and some eighteen destroyers, strongly supported by aircraft. The line, which runs along the Adriatic shore, is at many points much exposed to attack from the water. Ancona station, for example, is on the high ground outside the town, and most of the river bridges are within sight of the sea.

The assault extended from Brindisi to Venice, and at the latter place airmen threw bombs into the Arsenal and attacked the oil-tanks and the balloon sheds on the Lida. In the Western press the movement was interpreted only as a barbarous attempt to send St. Mark's the way of Rheims and Louvain; but it was in reality a serious military



The Austrian Naval Raid in the Adriatic.



operation. In the north the cruiser *Novara*, with a flotilla of destroyers, attacked Porto Corsini, north of Ravenna, in the hope of wrecking the Italian torpedo-boat base. The destroyers were driven off, and one was seriously damaged. Farther south the cruiser *St. George* bombarded the railway station and bridges at Rimini. In the centre the battleship *Zrinyi* attacked Sinigaglia, and claimed to have wrecked the railway station and railway bridge and part of the railway line, while south of Ancona the battleship *Radetzky* wrecked the bridge over the Potenza River. In the south the cruisers *Helgoland* and *Admiral Spaun*, assisted by destroyers, attacked in the neighbourhood of Manfredonia and Viesti. They shelled a railway bridge, a railway station, and several signal stations, and did some damage to the coast towns. It was all over before 6 a.m., and the squadron sailed back to Pola in safety. The Italian fleet seems to have been taken by surprise, and the marauders were unmolested. It was a well-conceived and well-executed enterprise, and achieved much of its purpose.

On the same day, 24th May, the Austrians blew up two bridges in the Adige valley, thereby revealing their plan of campaign. They were resolved to stand on the defensive at the outset in the strong positions which fortune had given them. They would hold the crests of the passes along the frontier of the Trentino and the line of the Carnic Alps. On the Isonzo front they would abandon all the country west of the river line, and make their stand on a fortified line well to the east, which only touched the Isonzo at Gorizia (Görz), where they held a bridgehead on the western bank. Their best troops

were busy in Galicia, including the famous 14th Tirol Corps, and they had only Landsturm and a few reserve divisions wherewith to meet the army of Italy. The Archduke Eugene, not the most successful of generals, had taken over the command, and his aim was to risk nothing till von Mackensen had finished his Galician enterprise and first-line troops could be spared for this frontier.

On the 24th General Cadorna began his advance. His main army moved against the Isonzo, and was directed to the isolation and capture of Gorizia, a necessary prelude to an advance on Trieste. A second army was concentrated on the Trentino frontier, with the capture of Trent as its nominal aim. Its purpose, however, was largely defensive. It aimed to acquire positions that would check that counter-attack from the Trentino which would frustrate, if successful, the whole eastern movement. Between these armies, detachments began to work through the Dolomite and Carnic passes—also with a purpose mainly defensive, until Cadorna's success in the east should make feasible an offensive movement against the Franzenfeste-Villach line.

The Italian mobilization was slow, and till the close of May the actions were only affairs of covering troops, and little ground was won except that which the Austrians had voluntarily yielded. On the evening of the 24th the eastern army was well inside Austrian territory, its left pushed forward to Caporetto on the Isonzo just under Monte Nero, its centre looking down on Gorizia from the high ground between the Indria and the Isonzo, and its right between Cormons and Terzo. On the extreme right, among the islands of the coast, the

Italian destroyers were busy. In the following week and onward till the end of the month the record is one of slow and cautious advance. It was a wet season, and the Isonzo, fed from the hills, floods easily, thereby making operations difficult when the enemy has destroyed the bridges. The Italian left about Caporetto was reinforced, preparatory to an attack on the height of Monte Nero, which overlooks the northern line from Gorizia. Italian aviators persistently bombarded Monfalcone and the railway between Gorizia and Trieste, in order to cut off supplies and reinforcements for the troops on the river line, while destroyers shelled the Monfalcone shipyards, and the coast town of Grado was taken. By the end of May the Isonzo had been reached, but had not been crossed, by the Italian army.

In the central section of the frontier there was much scattered fighting, and the Italians succeeded in occupying several of the passes. On the 24th the Val d'Inferno pass at the head of the Degano valley was carried by a bayonet attack. More im-

May 30. portant was the capture, on the 30th, of Cortina, on the great Strada d'Alemagna. The place is not more than fifteen miles as the crow flies from the Franzenfeste-Villach railway, but in these fifteen miles are included the highest peaks of the Dolomites, and the road—one of the finest in Europe—runs through a narrow defile which gives every advantage to the defence.

The Trentino fighting began also on the 24th. Detachments on that day pushed forward to the frontier on both sides of the Lake of Garda; up the Chiese valley to Caffaro, which is just on the

## BEGINNING OF ITALY'S CAMPAIGN. 191

frontier under the guns of the Italian fort of Rocca d'Anfo ; and up the Oglio valley to the Tonale Pass. Troops moved along the Italian ridge of Monte Baldo, east of Lake Garda, towards the Austrian summit of Monte Altissimo. On the east side of the salient in the Brenta valley an advance began, and on the 27th it had reached a point five miles from Borgo. On the *May 27.* same day the frontier town of Ala, on the Adige, was captured, and by the end of the month the Italians held the high ground on the south which commanded the forts of Rovoreto. So far the successes, though small, had been continuous. Trent is girdled by a number of lesser fortresses commanding the converging routes. Such is Rovoreto on the Adige ; such are Lardaro on the Chiesi, Levico on the Brenta, and the important fort of Riva at the head of Lake Garda. The closing in upon these outworks by the Italian armies meant that daily the offensive power of the enemy in the salient was declining. He no longer held the rim of the cup from which he could descend at will upon the plains.



## APPENDICES



## APPENDIX I.

### THE SECOND BATTLE OF YPRES AND THE BATTLE OF FESTUBERT.

#### SIR JOHN FRENCH'S SEVENTH DISPATCH.

From the Field-Marshal Commanding-in-Chief, The British  
Army in France.

To the Secretary of State for War, War Office, London, S.W.

General Headquarters, 15th June, 1915.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to report that since the date of my last dispatch (5th April, 1915) the Army in France under my command has been heavily engaged opposite both flanks of the line held by the British Forces.

I. In the North the town and district of Ypres have once more in this campaign been successfully defended against vigorous and sustained attacks made by large forces of the enemy, and supported by a mass of heavy and field artillery, which, not only in number, but also in weight and calibre, is superior to any concentration of guns which has previously assailed that part of the line.

In the South a vigorous offensive has again been taken by troops of the First Army, in the course of which a large area of entrenched and fortified ground has been captured from the enemy, whilst valuable support has been afforded to the attack which our Allies have carried on with such marked success against the enemy's positions to the east of Arras and Lens.



II. I much regret that during the period under report the fighting has been characterized on the enemy's side by a cynical and barbarous disregard of the well-known usages of civilized war and a flagrant defiance of the Hague Convention.

All the scientific resources of Germany have apparently been brought into play to produce a gas of so virulent and poisonous a nature that any human being brought into contact with it is first paralysed and then meets with a lingering and agonizing death.

The enemy has invariably preceded, prepared, and supported his attacks by a discharge in stupendous volume of these poisonous gas fumes whenever the wind was favourable.

Such weather conditions have only prevailed to any extent in the neighbourhood of Ypres, and there can be no doubt that the effect of these poisonous fumes materially influenced the operations in that theatre, until experience suggested effective counter measures, which have since been so perfected as to render them innocuous.

The brain power and thought which has evidently been at work before this unworthy method of making war reached the pitch of efficiency which has been demonstrated in its practice shows that the Germans must have harboured these designs for a long time.

As a soldier I cannot help expressing the deepest regret and some surprise that an Army which hitherto has claimed to be the chief exponent of the chivalry of war should have stooped to employ such devices against brave and gallant foes.

#### HILL 60.

III. On the night of Saturday, April 17th, a commanding hill which afforded the enemy excellent artillery observation towards the West and North-West was successfully mined and captured.

This hill, known as Hill 60, lies opposite the northern extremity of the line held by the 2nd Corps.

The operation was planned and the mining commenced by Major-General Bulfin before the ground was handed over to the troops under Lieutenant-General Sir Charles Fergusson, under whose supervision the operation was carried out.

The mines were successfully fired at 7 p.m. on the 17th, and immediately afterwards the hill was attacked and gained, without difficulty, by the 1st Battalion, Royal West Kent Regiment, and the 2nd Battalion, King's Own Scottish Borderers. The attack was well supported by the Divisional Artillery, assisted by French and Belgian batteries.

During the night several of the enemy's counter-attacks were repulsed with heavy loss, and fierce hand-to-hand fighting took place; but on the early morning of the 18th the enemy succeeded in forcing back the troops holding the right of the hill to the reverse slope, where, however, they hung on throughout the day.

On the evening of the 18th these two battalions were relieved by the 2nd Battalion, West Riding Regiment, and the 2nd Battalion, King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, who again stormed the hill under cover of heavy artillery fire, and the enemy was driven off at the point of the bayonet.

In this operation 53 prisoners were captured, including four officers.

On the 20th and following days many unsuccessful attacks by the enemy were made on Hill 60, which was continuously shelled by heavy artillery.

On May 1st another attempt to recapture Hill 60 was supported by great volumes of asphyxiating gas, which caused nearly all the men along a front of about 400 yards to be immediately struck down by its fumes.

The splendid courage with which the leaders rallied their men and subdued the natural tendency to panic (which is inevitable on such occasions), combined with the prompt intervention of supports, once more drove the enemy back.

A second and more severe "gas" attack, under much

more favourable weather conditions, enabled the enemy to recapture this position on May 5th.

The enemy owes his success in this last attack entirely to the use of asphyxiating gas. It was only a few days later that the means, which have since proved so effective, of counteracting this method of making war were put into practice. Had it been otherwise, the enemy's attack on May 5th would most certainly have shared the fate of all the many previous attempts he had made.

#### THE COMING OF THE GAS.

IV. It was at the commencement of the Second Battle of Ypres on the evening of the 22nd April, referred to in paragraph 1 of this report, that the enemy first made use of asphyxiating gas.

Some days previously I had complied with General Joffre's request to take over the trenches occupied by the French, and on the evening of the 22nd the troops holding the lines east of Ypres were posted as follows :—

From Steenstraate to the east of Langemarck, as far as the Poelcappelle Road, a French Division.

Thence, in a south-easterly direction toward the Passchendaele-Becelaere Road, the Canadian Division.

Thence a Division took up the line in a southerly direction east of Zonnebeke to a point west of Becelaere, whence another Division continued the line south-east to the northern limit of the Corps on its right.

Of the 5th Corps there were four battalions in Divisional Reserve about Ypres ; the Canadian Division had one battalion in Divisional Reserve, and the 1st Canadian Brigade in Army Reserve. An Infantry Brigade, which had just been withdrawn after suffering heavy losses on Hill 60, was resting about Vlamertinghe.

Following a heavy bombardment, the enemy attacked the French Division at about 5 p.m., using asphyxiating gases for the first time. Aircraft reported that at about

5 p.m. thick yellow smoke had been seen issuing from the German trenches between Langemarck and Bixschoote. The French reported that two simultaneous attacks had been made east of the Ypres-Staden Railway, in which these asphyxiating gases had been employed.

What follows almost defies description. The effect of these poisonous gases was so virulent as to render the whole of the line held by the French Division mentioned above practically incapable of any action at all. It was at first impossible for anyone to realize what had actually happened. The smoke and fumes hid everything from sight and hundreds of men were thrown into a comatose or dying condition, and within an hour the whole position had to be abandoned, together with about 50 guns.

I wish particularly to repudiate any idea of attaching the least blame to the French Division for this unfortunate incident.

After all the examples our gallant Allies have shown of dogged and tenacious courage in the many trying situations in which they have been placed throughout the course of this campaign it is quite superfluous for me to dwell on this aspect of the incident, and I would only express my firm conviction that, if any troops in the world had been able to hold their trenches in the face of such a treacherous and altogether unexpected onslaught, the French Division would have stood firm.

#### THE STAND OF THE CANADIANS.

The left flank of the Canadian Division was thus left dangerously exposed to serious attack in flank, and there appeared to be a prospect of their being overwhelmed and of a successful attempt by the Germans to cut off the British troops occupying the salient to the East.

In spite of the danger to which they were exposed the Canadians held their ground with a magnificent display of tenacity and courage; and it is not too much to say that

the bearing and conduct of these splendid troops averted a disaster which might have been attended with the most serious consequences.

They were supported with great promptitude by the reserves of the Divisions holding the salient and by a Brigade which had been resting in billets.

Throughout the night the enemy's attacks were repulsed, effective counter-attacks were delivered, and at length touch was gained with the French right, and a new line was formed.

The 2nd London Heavy Battery, which had been attached to the Canadian Division, was posted behind the right of the French Division, and, being involved in their retreat, fell into the enemy's hands. It was recaptured by the Canadians in their counter-attack, but the guns could not be withdrawn before the Canadians were again driven back.

During the night I directed the Cavalry Corps and the Northumbrian Division, which was then in general reserve, to move to the west of Ypres, and placed these troops at the disposal of the General Officer Commanding the Second Army. I also directed other reserve troops from the 3rd Corps and the First Army to be held in readiness to meet eventualities.

In the confusion of the gas and smoke the Germans succeeded in capturing the bridge at Steenstraate and some works south of Lizerne, all of which were in occupation by the French.

The enemy having thus established himself to the west of the Ypres Canal, I was somewhat apprehensive of his succeeding in driving a wedge between the French and Belgian troops at this point. I directed, therefore, that some of the reinforcements sent north should be used to support and assist General Putz, should he find difficulty in preventing any further advance of the Germans west of the canal.

At about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 23rd connexion was finally ensured between the left of the Canadian Division

and the French right, about eight hundred yards east of the canal; but as this entailed the maintenance by the British troops of a much longer line than that which they had held before the attack commenced on the previous night, there were no reserves available for counter-attack until reinforcements, which were ordered up from the Second Army, were able to deploy to the east of Ypres.

#### REINFORCEMENTS ARRIVE.

Early on the morning of the 23rd I went to see General Foch, and from him I received a detailed account of what had happened, as reported by General Putz. General Foch informed me that it was his intention to make good the original line and regain the trenches which the French Division had lost. He expressed the desire that I should maintain my present line, assuring me that the original position would be re-established in a few days. General Foch further informed me that he had ordered up large French reinforcements, which were now on their way, and that troops from the North had already arrived to reinforce General Putz.

I fully concurred in the wisdom of the General's wish to re-establish our old line, and agreed to co-operate in the way he desired, stipulating, however, that if the position was not re-established within a limited time I could not allow the British troops to remain in so exposed a situation as that which the action of the previous twenty-four hours had compelled them to occupy.

During the whole of the 23rd the enemy's artillery was very active, and his attacks all along the front were supported by some heavy guns which had been brought down from the coast in the neighbourhood of Ostend.

The loss of the guns on the night of the 22nd prevented this fire from being kept down and much aggravated the situation. Our positions, however, were well maintained by the vigorous counter-attacks made by the 5th Corps.

During the day I directed two Brigades of the 3rd Corps,

and the Lahore Division of the Indian Corps, to be moved up to the Ypres area and placed at the disposal of the Second Army.

In the course of these two or three days many circumstances combined to render the situation east of the Ypres Canal very critical and most difficult to deal with.

The confusion caused by the sudden retirement of the French Division, and the necessity for closing up the gap and checking the enemy's advance at all costs, led to a mixing up of units and a sudden shifting of the areas of command, which was quite unavoidable. Fresh units, as they came up from the South, had to be pushed into the firing line in an area swept by artillery fire which, owing to the capture of the French guns, we were unable to keep down.

All this led to very heavy casualties ; and I wish to place on record the deep admiration which I feel for the resource and presence of mind evinced by the leaders actually on the spot.

The parts taken by Major-General Snow and Brigadier-General Hull were reported to me as being particularly marked in this respect.

An instance of this occurred on the afternoon of the 24th when the enemy succeeded in breaking through the line at St. Julien.

Brigadier-General Hull, acting under the orders of Lieutenant-General Alderson, organized a powerful counter-attack with his own Brigade and some of the nearest available units. He was called upon to control, with only his Brigade staff, parts of battalions from six separate divisions which were quite new to the ground. Although the attack did not succeed in retaking St. Julien, it effectually checked the enemy's further advance.

It was only on the morning of the 25th that the enemy were able to force back the left of the Canadian Division from the point where it had originally joined the French line.

## THE LAHORE AND NORTHUMBRIAN DIVISIONS.

During the night, and the early morning of the 25th, the enemy directed a heavy attack against the Division at Broodseinde cross-roads which was supported by a powerful shell fire, but he failed to make any progress.

During the whole of this time the town of Ypres and all the roads to the East and West were uninterruptedly subjected to a violent artillery fire, but in spite of this the supply of both food and ammunition was maintained throughout with order and efficiency.

During the afternoon of the 25th many German prisoners were taken, including some officers. The hand-to-hand fighting was very severe, and the enemy suffered heavy loss.

During the 26th the Lahore Division and a Cavalry Division were pushed up into the fighting line, the former on the right of the French, the latter in support of the 5th Corps.

In the afternoon the Lahore Division, in conjunction with the French right, succeeded in pushing the enemy back some little distance towards the North, but their further advance was stopped owing to the continual employment by the enemy of asphyxiating gas.

On the right of the Lahore Division the Northumberland Infantry Brigade advanced against St. Julien, and actually succeeded in entering, and for a time occupying, the southern portion of that village. They were, however, eventually driven back, largely owing to gas, and finally occupied a line a short way to the South. This attack was most successfully and gallantly led by Brigadier-General Riddell, who, I regret to say, was killed during the progress of the operation.

Although no attack was made on the south-eastern side of the salient, the troops operating to the east of Ypres were subjected to heavy artillery fire from this direction which took some of the battalions, which were advancing North to the attack, in reverse.

Some gallant attempts made by the Lahore Division on



the 27th, in conjunction with the French, pushed the enemy further North; but they were partially frustrated by the constant fumes of gas to which they were exposed. In spite of this, however, a certain amount of ground was gained.

The French had succeeded in retaking Lizerne, and had made some progress at Steenstraate and Het Sas; but up to the evening of the 28th no further progress had been made toward the recapture of the original line.

#### THE SHORTENING OF THE BRITISH LINE.

I sent instructions, therefore, to Sir Herbert Plumer, who was now in charge of the operation, to take preliminary measures for the retirement to the new line which had been fixed upon.

On the morning of the 29th I had another interview with General Foch, who informed me that strong reinforcements were hourly arriving to support General Putz, and urged me to postpone issuing orders for any retirement until the result of his attack, which was timed to commence at daybreak on the 30th, should be known. To this I agreed, and instructed Sir Herbert Plumer accordingly.

No substantial advance having been made by the French, I issued orders to Sir Herbert Plumer at one o'clock on May 1st to commence his withdrawal to the new line.

The retirement was commenced the following night, and the new line was occupied on the morning of May 4th.

I am of opinion that this retirement, carried out deliberately with scarcely any loss, and in the face of an enemy in position, reflects the greatest possible credit on Sir Herbert Plumer and those who so efficiently carried out his orders.

The successful conduct of this operation was the more remarkable from the fact that on the evening of May 2nd, when it was only half completed, the enemy made a heavy attack, with the usual gas accompaniment, on St. Julien and the line to the west of it.

An attack on a line to the east of Fortuin was made at the same time under similar conditions.

In both cases our troops were at first driven from their trenches by gas fumes, but on the arrival of the supporting battalions and two brigades of a Cavalry Division, which were sent up in support from about Potijze, all the lost trenches were regained at night.

On the 3rd May, while the retirement was still going on, another violent attack was directed on the northern face of the salient. This was also driven back with heavy loss to the enemy.

Further attempts of the enemy during the night of the 3rd to advance from the woods west of St. Julien were frustrated entirely by the fire of our artillery.

During the whole of the 4th the enemy heavily shelled the trenches we had evacuated, quite unaware that they were no longer occupied. So soon as the retirement was discovered the Germans commenced to entrench opposite our new line and to advance their guns to new positions. Our artillery, assisted by aeroplanes, caused him considerable loss in carrying out these operations.

Up to the morning of the 8th the enemy made attacks at short intervals, covered by gas, on all parts of the line to the east of Ypres, but was everywhere driven back with heavy loss.

Throughout the whole period since the first break of the line on the night of April 22nd all the troops in this area had been constantly subjected to violent artillery bombardment from a large mass of guns with an unlimited supply of ammunition. It proved impossible whilst under so vastly superior fire of artillery to dig efficient trenches, or to properly reorganize the line, after the confusion and demoralization caused by the first great gas surprise and the subsequent almost daily gas attacks. Nor was it until after this date (May 8th) that effective preventives had been devised and provided. In these circumstances a violent bombardment of nearly the whole of the 5th Corps front broke out at 7 a.m. on the morning of the 8th, which gradually concentrated on

the front of the Division between north and south of Frezenberg. This fire completely obliterated the trenches and caused enormous losses.

#### THE LOSS OF THE FREZENBERG RIDGE.

The artillery bombardment was shortly followed by a heavy infantry attack, before which our line had to give way.

I relate what happened in Sir Herbert Plumer's own words :—

“ The right of one Brigade was broken about 10.15 a.m. ; then its centre, and then part of the left of the Brigade in the next section to the south. The Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry, however, although suffering very heavily, stuck to their fire or support trenches throughout the day. At this time two battalions were moved to General Headquarters 2nd line astride the Menin road to support and cover the left of their Division.

“ At 12.25 p.m. the centre of a Brigade further to the left also broke ; its right battalion, however, the 1st Suffolks, which had been refused to cover a gap, still held on and were apparently surrounded and overwhelmed. Meanwhile, three more battalions had been moved up to reinforce, two other battalions were moved up in support to General Headquarters line, and an Infantry Brigade came up to the grounds of Vlamertinghe Château in Corps Reserve.

“ At 11.30 a.m. a small party of Germans attempted to advance against the left of the British line, but were destroyed by the 2nd Essex Regiment.

“ A counter-attack was launched at 3.30 p.m. by the 1st York and Lancaster Regiment, 3rd Middlesex Regiment, 2nd East Surrey Regiment, 2nd Royal Dublin Fusiliers, and the 1st Royal Warwickshire Regiment. The counter-attack reached Frezenberg, but was eventually driven back and held up on a line running about north and south through Verlorenhoek, despite repeated efforts to advance. The 12th London Regiment on the left succeeded at great cost in

reaching the original trench line, and did considerable execution with their machine gun.

"The 7th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders and the 1st East Lancashire Regiment attacked in a north-easterly direction towards Wieltje, and connected the old trench line with the ground gained by the counter-attack, the line being consolidated during the night.

"During the night orders were received that two Cavalry Divisions would be moved up and placed at the disposal of the 5th Corps, and a Territorial Division would be moved up to be used if required.

"On the 9th the Germans again repeated their bombardment. Very heavy shell fire was concentrated for two hours on the trenches of the 2nd Gloucestershire Regiment and 2nd Cameron Highlanders, followed by an infantry attack which was successfully repulsed. The Germans again bombarded the salient, and a further attack in the afternoon succeeded in occupying 150 yards of trench. The Gloucesters counter-attacked, but suffered heavily, and the attack failed. The salient being very exposed to shell fire from both flanks, as well as in front, it was deemed advisable not to attempt to retake the trench at night, and a retrenchment was therefore dug across it.

"At 3 p.m. the enemy started to shell the whole front of the centre Division, and it was reported that the right Brigade of this Division was being heavily punished, but continued to maintain its line.

"The trenches of the Brigades on the left centre were also heavily shelled during the day, and attacked by infantry. Both attacks were repulsed.

#### THE GERMAN BOMBARDMENT.

"On the 10th instant the trenches on either side of the Menin-Ypres Road were shelled very severely all the morning. The 2nd Cameron Highlanders, 9th Royal Scots,\* and

\* *Query*, 9th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

the 3rd and 4th King's Royal Rifles, however, repulsed an attack made, under cover of gas, with heavy loss. Finally, when the trenches had been practically destroyed and a large number of the garrison buried, the 3rd King's Royal Rifles and 4th Rifle Brigade fell back to the trenches immediately west of Bellewaarde Wood. So heavy had been the shell fire that the proposal to join up the line with a switch through the wood had to be abandoned, the trees broken by the shells forming an impassable entanglement.

"After a comparatively quiet night and morning (10th-11th) the hostile artillery fire was concentrated on the trenches of the 2nd Cameron Highlanders and 1st Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders at a slightly more northern point than on the previous day. The Germans attacked in force and gained a footing in part of the trenches, but were promptly ejected by a supporting company of the 9th Royal Scots.\* After a second short artillery bombardment the Germans again attacked about 4.15 p.m., but were again repulsed by rifle and machine-gun fire. A third bombardment followed, and this time the Germans succeeded in gaining a trench—or rather what was left of it—a local counter-attack failing. However, during the night the enemy were again driven out. The trench by this time being practically non-existent, the garrison found it untenable under the very heavy shell fire the enemy brought to bear upon it, and the trench was evacuated. Twice more did the German snipers creep back into it, and twice more they were ejected. Finally, a re-trenchment was made, cutting off the salient which had been contested throughout the day. It was won owing solely to the superior weight and number of the enemy's guns, but both our infantry and our artillery took a very heavy toll of the enemy, and the ground lost has proved of little use to the enemy.

"On the remainder of the front the day passed comparatively quietly, though most parts of the line underwent intermittent shelling by guns of various calibres.

\* Query, 9th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders.

" With the assistance of the Royal Flying Corps the 31st Heavy Battery scored a direct hit on a German gun, and the North Midland Heavy Battery got on to some German howitzers with great success.

" With the exception of another very heavy burst of shell fire against the right Division early in the morning the 12th passed uneventfully.

" On the night of the 12th-13th the line was re-organized, the centre Division retiring into Army Reserve to rest, and their places being taken in the trenches by the two Cavalry Divisions ; the Artillery and Engineers of the centre Division forming with them what was known as the ' Cavalry Force ' under the command of General De Lisle.

#### THE FIGHT OF MAY 13TH.

" On the 13th the various reliefs having been completed without incident, the heaviest bombardment yet experienced broke out at 4.30 a.m., and continued with little intermission throughout the day. At about 7.45 a.m. the Cavalry Brigade astride the railway, having suffered very severely, and their trenches having been obliterated, fell back about 800 yards. The North Somerset Yeomanry on the right of the Brigade, although also suffering severely, hung on to their trenches throughout the day, and actually advanced and attacked the enemy with the bayonet. The Brigade on its right also maintained its position ; as did also the Cavalry Division, except the left squadron which, when reduced to sixteen men, fell back. The 2nd Essex Regiment, realizing the situation, promptly charged and retook the trench, holding it till relieved by the Cavalry. Meanwhile a counter-attack by two Cavalry Brigades was launched at 2.30 p.m., and succeeded, in spite of very heavy shrapnel and rifle fire, in regaining the original line of trenches, turning out the Germans who had entered it, and in some cases pursuing them for some distance. But a very heavy shell fire was again opened on them, and they were again compelled to retire

to an irregular line in rear, principally the craters of shell holes. The enemy in their counter-attack suffered very severe losses.

"The fighting in other parts of the line was little less severe. The 1st East Lancashire Regiment were shelled out of their trenches, but their support company and the 2nd Essex Regiment, again acting on their own initiative, won them back. The enemy penetrated into the farm at the north-east corner of the line, but the 1st Rifle Brigade, after a severe struggle, expelled them. The 1st Hampshire Regiment also repelled an attack, and killed every German who got within fifty yards of their trenches. The 5th London Regiment, despite very heavy casualties, maintained their position unfalteringly. At the southern end of the line the left Brigade was once again heavily shelled, as indeed was the whole front. At the end of a very hard day's fighting our line remained in its former position, with the exception of the short distance lost by one Cavalry Division. Later, the line was pushed forward, and a new line was dug in a less exposed position, slightly in rear of that originally held. The night passed quietly.

"Working parties of from 1,200 to 1,800 men have been found every night by a Territorial Division and other units for work on rear lines of defence, in addition to the work performed by the garrisons in reconstructing the front line trenches which were daily destroyed by shell fire.

"The work performed by the Royal Flying Corps has been invaluable. Apart from the hostile aeroplanes actually destroyed, our airmen have prevented a great deal of aerial reconnaissance by the enemy, and have registered a large number of targets with our artillery.

#### INDIVIDUAL GALLANTRY.

"There have been many cases of individual gallantry. As instances may be given the following:—

"During one of the heavy attacks made against our

infantry gas was seen rolling forward from the enemy's trenches. Private Lynn of the 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers at once rushed to the machine gun without waiting to adjust his respirator. Single-handed he kept his gun in action the whole time the gas was rolling over, actually hoisting it on the parapet to get a better field of fire. Although nearly suffocated by the gas, he poured a stream of lead into the advancing enemy and checked their attack. He was carried to his dug-out, but, hearing another attack was imminent, he tried to get back to his gun. Twenty-four hours later he died in great agony from the effects of the gas.

"A young subaltern in a cavalry regiment went forward alone one afternoon to reconnoitre. He got into a wood, 1,200 yards in front of our lines, which he found occupied by Germans, and came back with the information that the enemy had evacuated a trench and were digging another—information which proved most valuable to the artillery as well as to his own unit.

"A patrol of two officers and a non-commissioned officer of the 1st Cambridgeshires went out one night to reconnoitre a German trench 350 yards away. Creeping along the parapet of the trench, they heard sounds indicating the presence of six or seven of the enemy. Further on they heard deep snores, apparently proceeding from a dug-out immediately beneath them. Although they knew that the garrison of the trench outnumbered them, they decided to procure an identification. Unfortunately in pulling out a clasp knife with which to cut off the sleeper's identity disc, one of the officer's revolvers went off. A conversation in agitated whispers broke out in the German trench, but the patrol crept safely away, the garrison being too startled to fire.

"Despite the very severe shelling to which the troops had been subjected, which obliterated trenches and caused very many casualties, the spirit of all ranks remains excellent. The enemy's losses, particularly on the 10th and 13th, have unquestionably been serious. On the latter day they evacu-



ated trenches (in face of the cavalry counter-attack) in which were afterwards found quantities of equipment and some of their own wounded. The enemy have been seen stripping our dead, and on three occasions men in khaki have been seen advancing."

#### THE FIGHT OF MAY 24TH.

The fight went on by the exchange of desultory shell and rifle fire, but without any remarkable incident until the morning of May 24th. During this period, however, the French on our left had attained considerable success. On the 15th instant they captured Steenstraete and the trenches in Het Sas, and on the 16th they drove the enemy headlong over the canal, finding two thousand German dead. On the 17th they made a substantial advance on the east side of the canal, and on the 20th they repelled a German counter-attack, making a further advance in the same direction, and taking one hundred prisoners.

On the early morning of the 24th a violent outburst of gas against nearly the whole front was followed by heavy shell fire, and the most determined attack was delivered against our position east of Ypres.

The hour the attack commenced was 2.45 a.m. A large proportion of the men were asleep, and the attack was too sudden to give them time to put on their respirators.

The 2nd Royal Irish and the 9th Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, overcome by gas fumes, were driven out of a farm held in front of the left Division, and this the enemy proceeded to hold and fortify.

All attempts to retake this farm during the day failed, and during the night of the 24th-25th the General Officer Commanding the left Division decided to take up a new line which, although slightly in rear of the old one, he considered to be a much better position. This operation was successfully carried out.

Throughout the day the whole line was subjected to one of the most violent artillery attacks which it had ever under-

gone; and the 5th Corps and the Cavalry Divisions engaged had to fight hard to maintain their positions. On the following day, however, the line was consolidated, joining the right of the French at the same place as before, and passing through Wieltje (which was strongly fortified) in a southerly direction on to Hooge, where the Cavalry have since strongly occupied the château, and pushed our line further east.

#### THE ADVANCE AT FROMELLES.

V. In pursuance of a promise which I made to the French Commander-in-Chief to support an attack which his troops were making on the 9th May between the right of my line and Arras, I directed Sir Douglas Haig to carry out on that date an attack on the German trenches in the neighbourhood of Rougebanc (north-west of Fromelles) by the 4th Corps, and between Neuve Chapelle and Givenchy by the 1st and Indian Corps.

The bombardment of the enemy's positions commenced at 5 a.m.

Half-an-hour later the 8th Division of the 4th Corps captured the first line of German trenches about Rougebanc, and some detachments seized a few localities beyond this line. It was soon found, however, that the position was much stronger than had been anticipated, and that a more extensive artillery preparation was necessary to crush the resistance offered by his numerous fortified posts.

Throughout the 9th and 10th repeated efforts were made to make further progress. Not only was this found to be impossible, but the violence of the enemy's machine-gun fire from his posts on the flanks rendered the captured trenches so difficult to hold that all the units of the 4th Corps had to retire to their original position by the morning of the 10th.

The 1st and Indian Divisions south of Neuve Chapelle met with no greater success, and on the evening of the 10th I sanctioned Sir Douglas Haig's proposal to concentrate all our available resources on the southern point of attack.

The 7th Division was moved round from the 4th Corps area to support this attack, and I directed the General Officer Commanding the First Army to delay it long enough to ensure a powerful and deliberate artillery preparation.

The operations of the 9th and 10th formed part of a general plan of attack which the Allies were conjointly conducting on a line extending from the north of Arras to the south of Armentières; and, although immediate progress was not made during this time by the British forces, their attack assisted in securing the brilliant successes attained by the French forces on their right, not only by holding the enemy in their front, but by drawing off a part of the German reinforcements which were coming up to support their forces east of Arras.

It was decided that the attack should be resumed on the night of the 12th instant, but the weather continued very dull and misty, interfering much with artillery observation. Orders were finally issued, therefore, for the action to commence on the night of the 15th instant.

#### THE BATTLE OF FESTUBERT.

On the 15th May I moved the Canadian Division into the 1st Corps area and placed them at the disposal of Sir Douglas Haig.

The infantry of the Indian Corps and the 2nd Division of the 1st Corps advanced to the attack of the enemy's trenches which extended from Richebourg L'Avoué in a south-westerly direction.

Before daybreak the 2nd Division had succeeded in capturing two lines of the enemy's trenches, but the Indian Corps were unable to make any progress owing to the strength of the enemy's defences in the neighbourhood of Richebourg L'Avoué.

At daybreak the 7th Division, on the right of the 2nd, advanced to the attack, and by 7 a.m. had entrenched themselves on a line running nearly North and South, half-way

between their original trenches and La Quinque Rue, having cleared and captured several lines of the enemy's trenches, including a number of fortified posts.

As it was found impossible for the Indian Corps to make any progress in face of the enemy's defences, Sir Douglas Haig directed the attack to be suspended at this point and ordered the Indian Corps to form a defensive flank.

The remainder of the day was spent in securing and consolidating positions which had been won, and endeavouring to unite the inner flanks of the 7th and 2nd Divisions, which were separated by trenches and posts strongly held by the enemy.

Various attempts which were made throughout the day to secure this object had not succeeded at nightfall in driving the enemy back.

The German communications leading to the rear of their positions were systematically shelled throughout the night.

About two hundred prisoners were captured on the 16th instant.

Fighting was resumed at daybreak; and by 11 o'clock the 7th Division had made a considerable advance, capturing several more of the enemy's trenches. The task allotted to this Division was to push on in the direction of Rue D'Ouvert, Chapelle St. Roch, and Canteleux.

The 2nd Division was directed to push on when the situation permitted towards the Rue du Marais and Violaines.

The Indian Division was ordered to extend its front far enough to enable it to keep touch with the left of the 2nd Division when they advanced.

On this day I gave orders for the 51st (Highland) Division to move into the neighbourhood of Estaires to be ready to support the operations of the First Army.

At about noon the enemy was driven out of the trenches and posts which he occupied between the two Divisions, the inner flanks of which were thus enabled to join hands.

By nightfall the 2nd and 7th Divisions had made good

progress, the area of captured ground being considerably extended to the right by the successful operations of the latter.

The state of the weather on the morning of the 18th much hindered an effective artillery bombardment, and further attacks had, consequently, to be postponed.

Infantry attacks were made throughout the line in the course of the afternoon and evening; but, although not very much progress was made, the line was advanced to the La Quinque Rue-Béthune Road before nightfall.

On the 19th May the 7th and 2nd Divisions were drawn out of the line to rest. The 7th Division was relieved by the Canadian Division and the 2nd Division by the 51st (Highland) Division.

Sir Douglas Haig placed the Canadian and 51st Divisions, together with the artillery of the 2nd and 7th Divisions, under the command of Lieutenant-General Alderson, whom he directed to conduct the operations which had hitherto been carried on by the General Officer Commanding First Corps; and he directed the 7th Division to remain in Army Reserve.

During the night of the 19th-20th a small post of the enemy in front of La Quinque Rue was captured.

During the night of the 20th-21st the Canadian Division brilliantly carried on the excellent progress made by the 7th Division by seizing several of the enemy's trenches and pushing forward their whole line several hundred yards. A number of prisoners and some machine guns were captured.

On the 22nd instant the 51st (Highland) Division was attached to the Indian Corps, and the General Officer Commanding the Indian Corps took charge of the operations at La Quinque Rue, Lieutenant-General Alderson with the Canadians conducting the operations to the south of that place.

On this day the Canadian Division extended their line slightly to the right and repulsed three very severe hostile counter-attacks.

On the 24th and 25th May the 47th Division (2nd London Territorial) succeeded in taking some more of the enemy's trenches and making good the ground gained to the east and north.

I had now reason to consider that the battle, which was commenced by the First Army on the 9th May and renewed on the 16th, having attained for the moment the immediate object I had in view, should not be further actively proceeded with; and I gave orders to Sir Douglas Haig to curtail his artillery attack and to strengthen and consolidate the ground he had won.

#### RESULTS OF THE BATTLE.

In the battle of Festubert above described the enemy was driven from a position which was strongly entrenched and fortified, and ground was won on a front of four miles to an average depth of 600 yards.

The enemy is known to have suffered very heavy losses, and in the course of the battle 785 prisoners and 10 machine guns were captured. A number of machine guns were also destroyed by our fire.

During the period under report the Army under my command has taken over trenches occupied by some other French Divisions.

I am much indebted to General D'Urbal, commanding the 10th French Army, for the valuable and efficient support received throughout the battle of Festubert from three groups of French 75 millimetre guns.

In spite of very unfavourable weather conditions, rendering observation most difficult, our own artillery did excellent work throughout the battle.

#### WORK OF THE THIRD CORPS.

VI. During the important operations described above, which were carried on by the First and Second Armies, the 3rd Corps was particularly active in making demonstrations

with a view to holding the enemy in its front and preventing reinforcements reaching the threatened area.

As an instance of the successful attempts to deceive the enemy in this respect it may be mentioned that on the afternoon of the 24th instant a bombardment of about an hour was carried out by the 6th Division with the object of distracting attention from the Ypres salient.

Considerable damage was done to the enemy's parapets and wire; and that the desired impression was produced on the enemy is evident from the German wireless news on that day, which stated "West of Lille the English attempts to attack were nipped in the bud."

In previous reports I have drawn attention to the enterprise displayed by the troops of the 3rd Corps in conducting night reconnaissances, and to the courage and resource shown by officers' and other patrols in the conduct of these minor operations.

Throughout the period under report this display of activity has been very marked all along the 3rd Corps front, and much valuable information and intelligence have been collected.

#### WORK OF THE MEDICAL CORPS.

VII. I have much pleasure in again expressing my warm appreciation of the admirable manner in which all branches of the Medical Services now in the field, under the direction of Surgeon-General Sir Arthur Sloggett, have met and dealt with the many difficult situations resulting from the operations during the last two months.

The medical units at the front were frequently exposed to the enemy's fire, and many casualties occurred amongst the officers of the regimental Medical Service. At all times the officers, non-commissioned officers and men, and nurses carried out their duties with fearless bravery and great devotion to the welfare of the sick and wounded.

The evacuation of casualties from the front to the Base and to England was expeditiously accomplished by the

Administrative Medical Staffs at the front and on the Lines of Communication. All ranks employed in units of evacuation and in Base Hospitals have shown the highest skill and untiring zeal and energy in alleviating the condition of those who passed through their hands.

The whole organization of the Medical Services reflects the highest credit on all concerned.

#### WORK OF THE FLYING CORPS.

VIII. I have once more to call your Lordship's attention to the part taken by the Royal Flying Corps in the general progress of the campaign, and I wish particularly to mention the invaluable assistance they rendered in the operations described in this report, under the able direction of Major-General Sir David Henderson.

The Royal Flying Corps is becoming more and more an indispensable factor in combined operations. In co-operation with the artillery, in particular, there has been continuous improvement both in the methods and in the technical material employed. The ingenuity and technical skill displayed by the officers of the Royal Flying Corps, in effecting this improvement, have been most marked.

Since my last dispatch there has been a considerable increase both in the number and in the activity of German aeroplanes in our front. During this period there have been more than sixty combats in the air, in which not one British aeroplane has been lost. As these fights take place almost invariably over or behind the German lines, only one hostile aeroplane has been brought down in our territory. Five more, however, have been definitely wrecked behind their own lines, and many have been chased down and forced to land in most unsuitable ground.

In spite of the opposition of hostile aircraft, and the great number of anti-aircraft guns employed by the enemy, air reconnaissance has been carried out with regularity and accuracy.



I desire to bring to your Lordship's notice the assistance given by the French Military Authorities, and in particular by General Hirschauer, Director of the French Aviation Service, and his assistants, Colonel Bottieaux and Colonel Stammler, in the supply of aeronautical material, without which the efficiency of the Royal Flying Corps would have been seriously impaired.

#### SUPPLIES AND TRANSPORT.

IX. In this dispatch I wish again to remark upon the exceptionally good work done throughout this campaign by the Army Service Corps and by the Army Ordnance Department, not only in the field, but also on the Lines of Communication and at the Base ports.

To foresee and meet the requirements in the matter of Ammunition, Stores, Equipment, Supplies, and Transport has entailed on the part of the officers, non-commissioned officers, and men of these Services a sustained effort which has never been relaxed since the beginning of the war, and which has been rewarded by the most conspicuous success.

The close co-operation of the Railway Transport Department, whose excellent work, in combination with the French Railway Staff, has ensured the regularity of the maintenance services, has greatly contributed to this success.

The degree of efficiency to which these Services have been brought was well demonstrated in the course of the Second Battle of Ypres.

The roads between Poperinghe and Ypres, over which transport, supply, and ammunition columns had to pass, were continually searched by hostile heavy artillery during the day and night; whilst the passage of the canal through the town of Ypres, and along the roads east of that town, could only be effected under most difficult and dangerous conditions as regards hostile shell fire. Yet, throughout the whole five or six weeks during which these conditions prevailed, the work was carried on with perfect order and efficiency.

## THE ARRIVAL OF THE "NEW" ARMY.

X. Since the date of my last report some Divisions of the "New" Army have arrived in this country.

I made a close inspection of one Division, formed up on parade, and have at various times seen several units belonging to others.

These Divisions have as yet had very little experience in actual fighting ; but, judging from all I have seen, I am of opinion that they ought to prove a valuable addition to any fighting force.

As regards the Infantry, their physique is excellent, whilst their bearing and appearance on parade reflects great credit on the officers and staffs responsible for their training. The units appear to be thoroughly well officered and commanded. The equipment is in good order and efficient.

Several units of artillery have been tested in the firing line behind the trenches, and I hear very good reports of them. Their shooting has been extremely good, and they are quite fit to take their places in the line.

The Pioneer Battalions have created a very favourable impression, the officers being keen and ingenious, and the men of good physique and good diggers. The equipment is suitable. The training in field works has been good, but, generally speaking, they require the assistance of Regular Royal Engineers as regards laying out of important works. Man for man in digging the battalions should do practically the same amount of work as an equivalent number of sappers, and in rivetting, entanglement, etc., a great deal more than the ordinary infantry battalions.

## THE TERRITORIALS.

XI. During the months of April and May several divisions of the Territorial Force joined the Army under my command.

Experience has shown that these troops have now reached

a standard of efficiency which enables them to be usefully employed in complete divisional units.

Several divisions have been so employed ; some in the trenches, others in the various offensive and defensive operations reported in this dispatch.

In whatever kind of work these units have been engaged, they have all borne an active and distinguished part, and have proved themselves thoroughly reliable and efficient.

The opinion I have expressed in former dispatches as to the use and value of the Territorial Force has been fully justified by recent events.

#### MR. ASQUITH'S VISIT.

XII. The Prime Minister was kind enough to accept an invitation from me to visit the Army in France, and arrived at my Headquarters on the 30th May.

Mr. Asquith made an exhaustive tour of the front, the hospitals, and all the administrative arrangements made by Corps Commanders for the health and comfort of men behind the trenches.

It was a great encouragement to all ranks to see the Prime Minister amongst them ; and the eloquent words which on several occasions he addressed to the troops had a most powerful and beneficial effect.

As I was desirous that the French Commander-in-Chief should see something of the British troops, I asked General Joffre to be kind enough to inspect a division on parade.

The General accepted my invitation, and on the 27th May he inspected the 7th Division, under the command of Major-General H. de la P. Gough, C.B., which was resting behind the trenches.

General Joffre subsequently expressed to me in a letter the pleasure it gave him to see the British troops, and his appreciation of their appearance on parade. He requested me to make this known to all ranks.

The Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the Right

Reverend Dr. Wallace Williamson, Dean of the Order of the Thistle, visited the Army in France between the 7th and 17th May, and made a tour of the Scottish regiments with excellent results.

#### SPIRIT OF THE TROOPS.

XIII. In spite of the constant strain put upon them by the arduous nature of the fighting which they are called upon to carry out daily and almost hourly, the spirit which animates all ranks of the Army in France remains high and confident.

They meet every demand made upon them with the utmost cheerfulness.

This splendid spirit is particularly manifested by the men in hospital, even amongst those who are mortally wounded.

The invariable question which comes from lips hardly able to utter a sound is, "How are things going on at the front?"

#### SIR DOUGLAS HAIG AND SIR HERBERT PLUMER.

XIV. In conclusion, I desire to bring to Your Lordship's special notice the valuable services rendered by General Sir Douglas Haig in his successful handling of the troops of the First Army throughout the Battle of Festubert, and Lieutenant-General Sir Herbert Plumer for his fine defence of Ypres throughout the arduous and difficult operations during the latter part of April and the month of May.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

J. D. P. FRENCH,

Field-Marshal,

Commanding-in-Chief,

The British Army in France.

## APPENDIX II.

### THE GALLIPOLI LANDING.

#### SIR IAN HAMILTON'S FIRST DISPATCH.

From the General Commanding the <sup>A.</sup>Mediterranean Expeditionary Force.

To the Secretary of State for War, War Office, London, S.W.

General Headquarters,  
Mediterranean Expeditionary Force,  
20th May, 1915.

MY LORD,

I have the honour to submit my report on the operations in the Gallipoli Peninsula up to and including the 5th May.

In accordance with your Lordship's instructions I left London on 13th March with my General Staff by special train to Marseilles, and thence in H.M.S. *Phaeton* to the scene of the naval operations in the Eastern Mediterranean, reaching Tenedos on the 17th March shortly after noon.

Immediately on arrival I conferred with Vice-Admiral de Robeck, Commanding the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet, General d'Amade, Commanding the French Corps Expéditionnaire; and Contre Amiral Guepratte, in command of the French Squadron. At this conference past difficulties were explained to me, and the intention to make a fresh attack on the morrow was announced. The amphibious battle between warships and land fortresses took place next day, the 18th of March. I witnessed these stupendous events, and thereupon cabled your Lordship my reluctant deduction

that the co-operation of the whole of the force under my command would be required to enable the Fleet effectively to force the Dardanelles.

#### THE GALLIPOLI PENINSULA.

By that time I had already carried out a preliminary reconnaissance of the north-western shore of the Gallipoli Peninsula, from its isthmus, where it is spanned by the Bulair fortified lines, to Cape Helles, at its extremest point. From Bulair this singular feature runs in a south-westerly direction for 52 miles, attaining near its centre a breadth of 12 miles. The northern coast of the northern half of the promontory slopes downwards steeply to the Gulf of Xeros, in a chain of hills, which extend as far as Cape Sulva. The precipitous fall of these hills precludes landing, except at a few narrow gullies, far too restricted for any serious military movements. The southern half of the peninsula is shaped like a badly-worn boot. The ankle lies between Gaba Tepe and Kalkmaz Dag; beneath the heel lie the cluster of forts at Kilid Bahr; whilst the toe is that promontory five miles in width, stretching from Tekke Burnu to Sedd-el-Bahr.

The three dominating features in this southern section seemed to me to be :—

(1) Saribair Mountain, running up in a succession of almost perpendicular escarpments to 970 feet. The whole mountain seemed to be a network of ravines and covered with thick jungle.

(2) Kilid Bahr plateau, which rises, a natural fortification artificially fortified, to a height of 700 feet to cover the forts of the Narrows from an attack from the *Ægean*.

(3) Achi Babi, a hill 600 feet in height, dominating at long field gun range what I have described as being the toe of the peninsula.

A peculiarity to be noted as regards this last southern sector is that from Achi Babi to Cape Helles the ground is

hollowed out like a spoon, presenting only its outer edges to direct fire from the sea. The inside of the spoon appears to be open and undulating, but actually it is full of spurs, nullahs, and confused under-features.

#### THE LANDING-PLACES.

Generally speaking the coast is precipitous, and good landing-places are few. Just south of Tekke Burnu is a small sandy bay (W), and half a mile north of it is another small break in the cliffs (X). Two miles farther up the coast the mouth of a stream indents these same cliffs (Y 2), and yet another mile and a half up a scrub-covered gully looked as if active infantry might be able to scramble up it on to heights not altogether dissimilar to those of Abraham, by Quebec (Y). Inside Sedd-el-Bahr is a sandy beach (V), about 300 yards across, facing a semi-circle of steeply-rising ground, as the flat bottom of a half-saucer faces the rim, a rim flanked on one side by an old castle, on the other by a modern fort. By Eski Hissarlik, on the east of Morto Bay (S), was another small beach, which was, however, dominated by the big guns from Asia. Turning northwards again, there are two good landing-places on either side of Gaba Tepe. Farther to the north of that promontory the beach was supposed to be dangerous and difficult. In most of these landing-places the trenches and lines of wire entanglements were plainly visible from on board ship. What seemed to be gun emplacements and infantry redoubts could also be made out through a telescope, but of the full extent of these defences and of the forces available to man them there was no possibility of judging except by practical test.

Altogether the result of this and subsequent reconnaissances was to convince me that nothing but a thorough and systematic scheme for flinging the whole of the troops under my command very rapidly ashore could be expected to meet with success; whereas, on the other hand, a tentative or piecemeal programme was bound to lead to disaster. The

landing of an army upon the theatre of operations I have described—a theatre strongly garrisoned throughout, and prepared for any such attempt—involved difficulties for which no precedent was forthcoming in military history except possibly in the sinister legends of Xerxes. The beaches were either so well defended by works and guns or else so restricted by nature that it did not seem possible, even by two or three simultaneous landings, to pass the troops ashore quickly enough to enable them to maintain themselves against the rapid concentration and counter-attack which the enemy was bound in such case to attempt. It became necessary, therefore, not only to land simultaneously at as many points as possible, but to threaten to land at other points as well. The first of these necessities involved another unavoidable if awkward contingency, the separation by considerable intervals of the force.

The weather was also bound to play a vital part in my landing. Had it been British weather there would have been no alternative but instantly to give up the adventure. To land two or three thousand men, and then to have to break off and leave them exposed for a week to the attacks of 34,000 regular troops, with a hundred guns at their back was not an eventuality to be lightly envisaged. Whatever happened the weather must always remain an incalculable factor, but at least by delay till the end of April we had a fair chance of several days of consecutive calm.

#### THE SAILING OF THE TRANSPORTS.

Before doing anything else I had to redistribute the troops on the transports to suit the order of their disembarkation. The bulk of the forces at my disposal had, perforce, been embarked without its having been possible to pay due attention to the operation upon which I now proposed that they should be launched.

Owing to lack of facilities at Mudros redistribution in that harbour was out of the question. With your Lordship's



approval, therefore, I ordered all the transports, except those of the Australian Infantry Brigade and the details encamped at Lemnos Island, to the Egyptian ports. On the 24th March I myself, together with the General Staff, proceeded to Alexandria, where I remained until 7th April, working out the allocation of troops to transports in minutest detail as a prelude to the forthcoming disembarkation. General d'Amade did likewise.

On the 1st April the remainder of the General Headquarters, which had not been mobilized when I left England, arrived at Alexandria.

Apart from the rearrangements of the troops, my visit to Egypt was not without profit, since it afforded me opportunities of conferring with the G.O.C. Egypt and of making myself acquainted with the troops, drawn from all parts of the French Republic and of the British Empire, which it was to be my privilege to command.

By the 7th April my preparations were sufficiently advanced to enable me to return with my General Staff to Lemnos, so as to put the finishing touches to my plan in close co-ordination with the Vice-Admiral Commanding the Eastern Mediterranean Fleet.

The covering force of the 29th Division left Mudros Harbour on the evening of 23rd April for the five beaches, S, V, W, X, and Y. Of these, V, W, and X were to be main landings, the landings at S and Y being made mainly to protect the flanks, to disseminate the forces of the enemy, and to interrupt the arrival of his reinforcements. The landings at S and Y were to take place at dawn, whilst it was planned that the first troops for V, W, and X beaches should reach the shore simultaneously at 5.30 a.m. after half an hour's bombardment from the Fleet.

The transports conveying the covering force arrived off Tenedos on the morning of the 24th, and during the afternoon the troops were transferred to the warships and fleet-sweepers in which they were to approach the shore. About

midnight these ships, each towing a number of cutters and other small boats, silently slipped their cables and, escorted by the 3rd Squadron of the Fleet, steamed slowly towards their final rendezvous at Cape Helles. The rendezvous was reached just before dawn on the 25th. The morning was absolutely still; there was no sign of life on the shore; a thin veil of mist hung motionless over the promontory; the surface of the sea was as smooth as glass. The four battleships and four cruisers which formed the 3rd Squadron at once took up the positions that had been allotted to them, and at 5 a.m., it being then light enough to fire, a violent bombardment of the enemy's defences was begun. Meanwhile the troops were being rapidly transferred to the small boats in which they were to be towed ashore. Not a move on the part of the enemy; except for shells thrown from the Asiatic side of the Straits the guns of the Fleet remained unanswered.

#### THE LANDING AT BEACHES S, Y, AND X.

The detachment detailed for S beach (Eski Hissarlik Point) consisted of the 2nd South Wales Borderers (less one company) under Lieut.-Colonel Casson. Their landing was delayed by the current, but by 7.30 a.m. it had been successfully effected at the cost of some 50 casualties, and Lieut.-Colonel Casson was able to establish his small force on the high ground near De Totts Battery. Here he maintained himself until the general advance on the 27th brought him into touch with the main body.

The landing on Y beach was entrusted to the King's Own Scottish Borderers and the Plymouth (Marine) Battalion, Royal Naval Division, specially attached to the 29th Division for this task, the whole under the command of Lieut.-Colonel Koe. The beach at this point consisted merely of a narrow strip of sand at the foot of a crumbling scrub-covered cliff some 200 feet high immediately to the west of Krithia.

A number of small gullies running down the face of the

cliff facilitated the climb to the summit, and so impracticable had these precipices appeared to the Turks that no steps had been taken to defend them. Very different would it have been had we, as was at one time intended, taken Y 2 for this landing. There a large force of infantry, entrenched up to their necks, and supported by machine and Hotchkiss guns, were awaiting an attempt which could hardly have made good its footing. But at Y both battalions were able in the first instance to establish themselves on the heights, reserves of food, water, and ammunition were hauled up to the top of the cliff, and, in accordance with the plan of operations, an endeavour was immediately made to gain touch with the troops landing at X beach. Unfortunately, the enemy's strong detachment from Y 2 interposed, our troops landing at X were fully occupied in attacking the Turks immediately to their front, and the attempt to join hands was not persevered with.

Later in the day a large force of Turks were seen to be advancing upon the cliffs above Y beach from the direction of Krithia, and Colonel Koe was obliged to entrench. From this time onward his small force was subjected to strong and repeated attacks, supported by field artillery, and owing to the configuration of the ground, which here drops inland from the edge of the cliff, the guns of the supporting ships could render him little assistance. Throughout the afternoon and all through the night the Turks made assault after assault upon the British line. They threw bombs into the trenches, and, favoured by darkness, actually led a pony with a machine gun on its back over the defences and were proceeding to come into action in the middle of our position when they were bayoneted.

The British repeatedly counter-charged with the bayonet, and always drove off the enemy for the moment, but the Turks were in a vast superiority and fresh troops took the place of those who temporarily fell back. Colonel Koe (since died of wounds) had become a casualty early in the day,

and the number of officers and men killed and wounded during the incessant fighting was very heavy. By 7 a.m. on the 26th only about half of the King's Own Scottish Borderers remained to man the entrenchment made for four times their number. These brave fellows were absolutely worn out with continuous fighting; it was doubtful if reinforcements could reach them in time, and orders were issued for them to be re-embarked. Thanks to H.M.S. *Goliath*, *Dublin*, *Amethyst*, and *Sapphire*, thanks also to the devotion of a small rearguard of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, which kept off the enemy from lining the cliff, the re-embarkation of the whole of the troops, together with the wounded, stores, and ammunition, was safely accomplished, and both battalions were brought round the southern end of the peninsula. Deplorable as the heavy losses had been, and unfortunate as was the tactical failure to make good so much ground at the outset, yet, taking the operation as it stood, there can be no doubt it has contributed greatly to the success of the main attack, seeing that the plucky stand made at Y beach had detained heavy columns of the enemy from arriving at the southern end of the peninsula during what it will be seen was a very touch-and-go struggle.

#### WORK OF "IMPLACABLE'S" GUNS.

The landing-place known as X beach consists of a strip of sand some 200 yards long by 8 yards wide at the foot of a low cliff. The troops to be landed here were the 1st Royal Fusiliers, who were to be towed ashore from H.M.S. *Implacable* in two parties, half a battalion at a time, together with a beach working party found by the Anson Battalion, Royal Naval Division. About 6 a.m. H.M.S. *Implacable*, with a boldness much admired by the Army, stood quite close in to the beach, firing very rapidly with every gun she could bring to bear. Thus seconded, the Royal Fusiliers made good their landing with but little loss. The battalion then advanced to attack the Turkish trenches on the Hill 114,

situated between V and W beaches, but were heavily counter-attacked and forced to give ground. Two more battalions of the 87th Brigade soon followed them, and by evening the troops had established themselves in an entrenched position extending from half a mile round the landing-place and as far south as Hill 114. Here they were in touch with the Lancashire Fusiliers, who had landed on W beach. Brigadier-General Marshall, commanding the 87th Brigade, had been wounded during the day's fighting, but continued in command of the brigade.

#### THE LANDING AT BEACH V.

The landing on V beach was planned to take place on the following lines:—

As soon as the enemy's defences had been heavily bombarded by the Fleet, three companies of the Dublin Fusiliers were to be towed ashore. They were to be closely followed by the collier *River Clyde* (Commander Unwin, R.N.), carrying between decks the balance of the Dublin Fusiliers, the Munster Fusiliers, half a battalion of the Hampshire Regiment, the West Riding Field Company, and other details.

The *River Clyde* had been specially prepared for the rapid disembarkation of her complement, and large openings for the exit of the troops had been cut in her sides, giving on to a wide gang-plank by which the men could pass rapidly into lighters which she had in tow. As soon as the first tows had reached land the *River Clyde* was to be run straight ashore. Her lighters were to be placed in position to form a gangway between the ship and the beach, and by this means it was hoped that 2,000 men could be thrown ashore with the utmost rapidity. Further, to assist in covering the landing, a battery of machine guns, protected by sandbags, had been mounted in her bows.

The remainder of the covering force detailed for this beach was then to follow in tows from the attendant battle-ships.

V beach is situated immediately to the west of Sedd-el-

Bahr. Between the bluff on which stands Sedd-el-Bahr village and that which is crowned by No. 1 Fort the ground forms a very regular amphitheatre of three or four hundred yards radius. The slopes down to the beach are slightly concave, so that the whole area contained within the limits of this natural amphitheatre, whose grassy terraces rise gently to a height of a hundred feet above the shore, can be swept by the fire of a defender. The beach itself is a sandy strip some 10 yards wide and 350 yards long, backed along almost the whole of its extent by a low sandy escarpment about 4 feet high, where the ground falls nearly sheer down to the beach. The slight shelter afforded by this escarpment played no small part in the operations of the succeeding thirty-two hours.

At the south-eastern extremity of the beach, between the shore and the village, stands the old fort of Sedd-el-Bahr, a battered ruin with wide breaches in its walls and mounds of fallen masonry within and around it. On the ridge to the north, overlooking the amphitheatre, stands a ruined barrack. Both of these buildings, as well as No. 1 Fort, had been long bombarded by the Fleet, and the guns of the forts had been put out of action; but their crumbled walls and the ruined outskirts of the village afforded cover for riflemen, while from the terraced slopes already described the defenders were able to command the open beach, as a stage is overlooked from the balconies of a theatre. On the very margin of the beach a strong barbed-wire entanglement, made of heavier metal and longer barbs than I have ever seen elsewhere, ran right across from the old fort of Sedd-el-Bahr to the foot of the north-western headland. Two-thirds of the way up the ridge a second and even stronger entanglement crossed the amphitheatre, passing in front of the old barrack and ending in the outskirts of the village. A third transverse entanglement, joining these two, ran up the hill near the eastern end of the beach, and almost at right angles to it. Above the upper entanglement the ground was scored with the enemy's

trenches, in one of which four pom-poms were emplaced ; in others were dummy pom-poms to draw fire, while the *débris* of the shattered buildings on either flank afforded cover and concealment for a number of machine guns, which brought a cross-fire to bear on the ground already swept by rifle fire from the ridge.

Needless to say, the difficulties in the way of previous reconnaissance had rendered it impossible to obtain detailed information with regard either to the locality or to the enemy's preparations.

As often happens in war, the actual course of events did not quite correspond with the intentions of the Commander. The *River Clyde* came into position off Sedd-el-Bahr in advance of the tows, and, just as the latter reached the shore, Commander Unwin beached his ship also. Whilst the boats and the collier were approaching the landing-place the Turks made no sign. Up to the very last moment it appeared as if the landing was to be unopposed. But the moment the first boat touched bottom the storm broke. A tornado of fire swept over the beach, the incoming boats, and the collier. The Dublin Fusiliers and the naval boats' crews suffered exceedingly heavy losses while still in the boats. Those who succeeded in landing and in crossing the strip of sand managed to gain some cover when they reached the low escarpment on the farther side. None of the boats, however, were able to get off again, and they and their crews were destroyed upon the beach.

Now came the moment for the *River Clyde* to pour forth her living freight ; but grievous delay was caused here by the difficulty of placing the lighters in position between the ship and the shore. A strong current hindered the work and the enemy's fire was so intense that almost every man engaged upon it was immediately shot. Owing, however, to the splendid gallantry of the naval working party, the lighters were eventually placed in position, and then the disembarkation began.

A company of the Munster Fusiliers led the way ; but, short as was the distance, few of the men ever reached the farther side of the beach through the hail of bullets which poured down upon them from both flanks and the front. As the second company followed, the extemporized pier of lighters gave way in the current. The end nearest to the shore drifted into deep water, and many men who had escaped being shot were drowned by the weight of their equipment in trying to swim from the lighter to the beach. Undaunted workers were still forthcoming, the lighters were again brought into position, and the third company of the Munster Fusiliers rushed ashore, suffering heaviest loss this time from shrapnel as well as from rifle, pom-pom, and machine-gun fire.

For a space the attempt to land was discontinued. When it was resumed the lighters again drifted into deep water, with Brigadier-General Napier, Captain Costeker, his Brigade-Major, and a number of men of the Hampshire Regiment on board. There was nothing for them all but to lie down on the lighters, and it was here that General Napier and Captain Costeker were killed. At this time, between 10 and 11 a.m., about 1,000 men had left the collier, and of these nearly half had been killed or wounded before they could reach the little cover afforded by the steep, sandy bank at the top of the beach. Further attempts to disembark were now given up. Had the troops all been in open boats but few of them would have lived to tell the tale. But, most fortunately, the collier was so constructed as to afford fairly efficient protection to the men who were still on board, and, so long as they made no attempt to land, they suffered comparatively little loss.

Throughout the remainder of the day there was practically no change in the position of affairs. The situation was probably saved by the machine-guns on the *River Clyde*, which did valuable service in keeping down the enemy's fire and in preventing any attempt on their part to launch a counter-attack. One half-company of the Dublin Fusiliers, which had been landed at a camber just east of Sedd-



el-Bahr village, was unable to work its way across to V beach, and by mid-day had only twenty-five men left. It was proposed to divert to Y beach that part of the main body which had been intended to land on V beach ; but this would have involved considerable delay owing to the distance, and the main body was diverted to W beach, where the Lancashire Fusiliers had already effected a landing.

Late in the afternoon part of the Worcestershire Regiment and the Lancashire Fusiliers worked across the high ground from W beach, and seemed likely to relieve the situation by taking the defenders of V beach in flank. The pressure on their own front, however, and the numerous barbed-wire entanglements which intervened, checked this advance, and at nightfall the Turkish garrison still held their ground. Just before dark some small parties of our men made their way along the shore to the outer walls of the Old Fort, and when night had fallen the remainder of the infantry from the collier were landed. A good force was now available for attack, but our troops were at such a cruel disadvantage as to position, and the fire of the enemy was still so accurate in the bright moonlight, that all attempts to clear the fort and the outskirts of the village during the night failed one after the other. The wounded who were able to do so without support returned to the collier under cover of darkness ; but otherwise the situation at daybreak on the 26th was the same as it had been on the previous day, except that the troops first landed were becoming very exhausted.

Twenty-four hours after the disembarkation began there were ashore on V beach the survivors of the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers and of two companies of the Hampshire Regiment. The Brigadier and his Brigade-Major had been killed ; Lieutenant-Colonel Carrington Smith, commanding the Hampshire Regiment, had been killed and the adjutant had been wounded. The Adjutant of the Munster Fusiliers was wounded, and the great majority of the senior officers were either wounded or killed. The remnant of the landing-party

still crouched on the beach beneath the shelter of the sandy escarpment which had saved so many lives. With them were two officers of my General Staff—Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie and Lieutenant-Colonel Williams. These two officers, who had landed from the *River Clyde*, had been striving, with conspicuous contempt for danger, to keep all their comrades in good heart during this day and night of ceaseless imminent peril.

Now that it was daylight once more, Lieutenant-Colonels Doughty-Wylie and Williams set to work to organize an attack on the hill above the beach. Any soldier who has endeavoured to pull scattered units together after they have been dominated for many consecutive hours by close and continuous fire will be able to take the measure of their difficulties. Fortunately General Hunter-Weston had arranged with Rear-Admiral Wemyss about this same time for a heavy bombardment to be opened by the ships upon the Old Fort, Sedd-el-Bahr Village, the Old Castle north of the village, and on the ground leading up from the beach. Under cover of this bombardment, and led by Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie, and Captain Walford, Brigade-Major R.A., the troops gained a footing in the village by 10 a.m. They encountered a most stubborn opposition and suffered heavy losses from the fire of well-concealed riflemen and machine guns. Undeterred by the resistance, and supported by the naval gunfire, they pushed forward, and soon after midday they penetrated to the northern edge of the village, whence they were in a position to attack the Old Castle and Hill 141. During this advance Captain Walford was killed. Lieutenant-Colonel Doughty-Wylie had most gallantly led the attack all the way up from the beach through the west side of the village, under a galling fire. And now, when, owing so largely to his own inspiring example and intrepid courage, the position had almost been gained, he was killed while leading the last assault. But the attack was pushed forward without wavering, and, fighting their way across the open with great dash,

the troops gained the summit and occupied the Old Castle and Hill 141 before 2 p.m.

#### THE LANDING AT BEACH W.

W beach consists of a strip of deep, powdery sand some 350 yards long and from 15 to 40 yards wide, situated immediately south of Tekke Burnu, where a small gully running down to the sea opens out a break in the cliffs. On either flank of the beach the ground rises precipitously, but, in the centre, a number of sand dunes afford a more gradual access to the ridge overlooking the sea. Much time and ingenuity had been employed by the Turks in turning this landing-place into a death trap. Close to the water's edge a broad wire entanglement extended the whole length of the shore and a supplementary barbed network lay concealed under the surface of the sea in the shallows. Land mines and sea mines had been laid. The high ground overlooking the beach was strongly fortified with trenches to which the gully afforded a natural covered approach. A number of machine guns also were cunningly tucked away into holes in the cliff so as to be immune from a naval bombardment whilst they were converging their fire on the wire entanglements. The crest of the hill overlooking the beach was in its turn commanded by high ground to the north-west and south-east, and especially by two strong infantry redoubts near point 138. Both these redoubts were protected by wire entanglements about 20 feet broad, and could be approached only by a bare glaciis-like slope leading up from the high ground above W beach or from the Cape Helles lighthouse. In addition, another separate entanglement ran down from these two redoubts to the edge of the cliff near the lighthouse, making intercommunication between V and W beaches impossible until these redoubts had been captured.

So strong, in fact, were the defences of W beach that the Turks may well have considered them impregnable, and it is my firm conviction that no finer feat of arms has ever

been achieved by the British soldier—or any other soldier—than the storming of these trenches from open boats on the morning of 25th April.

The landing at W had been entrusted to the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers (Major Bishop), and it was to the complete lack of the senses of danger or of fear of this daring battalion that we owed our astonishing success. As in the case of the landing at X, the disembarkation had been delayed for half an hour, but at 6 a.m. the whole battalion approached the shore together, towed by eight picket boats in line abreast, each picket boat pulling four ship's cutters. As soon as shallow water was reached, the tows were cast off and the boats were at once rowed to the shore. Three companies headed for the beach and a company on the left of the line made for a small ledge of rock immediately under the cliff at Tekke Burnu. Brigadier-General Hare, commanding the 88th Brigade, accompanied this latter party, which escaped the cross fire brought to bear upon the beach, and was also in a better position than the rest of the battalion to turn the wire entanglements.

While the troops were approaching the shore no shot had been fired from the enemy's trenches, but as soon as the first boat touched the ground a hurricane of lead swept over the battalion. Gallantly led by their officers, the Fusiliers literally hurled themselves ashore, and, fired at from right, left, and centre, commenced hacking their way through the wire. A long line of men was at once mown down as by a scythe, but the remainder were not to be denied. Covered by the fire of the warships, which had now closed right in to the shore, and helped by the flanking fire of the company on the extreme left, they broke through the entanglements and collected under the cliffs on either side of the beach. Here the companies were rapidly re-formed, and set forth to storm the enemy's entrenchments wherever they could find them.

In making these attacks the bulk of the battalion moved

up towards Hill 114 whilst a small party worked down towards the trenches on the Cape Helles side of the landing-place.

Several land mines were exploded by the Turks during the advance, but the determination of the troops was in no way affected. By 10 a.m. three lines of hostile trenches were in our hands, and our hold on the beach was assured.

About 9.30 a.m. more infantry had begun to disembark, and two hours later a junction was effected on Hill 114 with the troops who had landed on X beach.

On the right, owing to the strength of the redoubt on Hill 138, little progress could be made. The small party of Lancashire Fusiliers which had advanced in this direction succeeded in reaching the edge of the wire entanglements, but were not strong enough to do more, and it was here that Major Frankland, Brigade-Major of the 86th Infantry Brigade, who had gone forward to make a personal reconnaissance, was unfortunately killed. Brigadier-General Hare had been wounded earlier in the day, and Colonel Woolly-Dod, General Staff 29th Division, was now sent ashore to take command at W beach and organize a further advance.

At 2 p.m., after the ground near Hill 138 had been subjected to a heavy bombardment, the Worcester Regiment advanced to the assault. Several men of this battalion rushed forward with great spirit to cut passages through the entanglement; some were killed, others persevered, and by 4 p.m. the hill and redoubt were captured.

An attempt was now made to join hands with the troops on V beach, who could make no headway at all against the dominating defences of the enemy. To help them out the 86th Brigade pushed forward in an easterly direction along the cliff. There is a limit, however, to the storming of barbed-wire entanglements. More of these barred the way. Again the heroic wire-cutters came out. Through glasses they could be seen quietly snipping away under a hellish fire as if they were pruning a vineyard. Again some of them fell. The fire pouring out of No. 1 fort grew hotter and hotter, until

the troops, now thoroughly exhausted by a sleepless night and by the long day's fighting under a hot sun, had to rest on their laurels for a while.

When night fell, the British position in front of W beach extended from just east of Cape Helles lighthouse, through Hill 138, to Hill 114. Practically every man had to be thrown into the trenches to hold this line, and the only available reserves on this part of our front were the 2nd London Field Company R.E. and a platoon of the Anson Battalion, which had been landed as a beach working party.

During the night several strong and determined counter-attacks were made, all successfully repulsed without loss of ground. Meanwhile the disembarkation of the remainder of the division was proceeding on W and X beaches.

#### THE LANDING AT GABA TEPE.

The Australian and New Zealand Army Corps sailed out of Mudros Bay on the afternoon of 24th April, escorted by the 2nd Squadron of the Fleet, under Rear-Admiral Thursby. The rendezvous was reached just after half-past one in the morning of the 25th, and there the 1,500 men who had been placed on board H.M. ships before leaving Mudros were transferred to their boats. This operation was carried out with remarkable expedition, and in absolute silence. Simultaneously the remaining 2,500 men of the covering force were transferred from their transports to six destroyers. At 2.30 a.m. H.M. ships, together with the tows and the destroyers, proceeded to within some four miles of the coast, H.M.S. *Queen* (flying Rear-Admiral Thursby's flag) directing on a point about a mile north of Gaba Tepe. At 3.30 a.m. orders to go ahead and land were given to the tows and at 4.10 a.m. the destroyers were ordered to follow.

All these arrangements worked without a hitch, and were carried out in complete orderliness and silence. No breath of wind ruffled the surface of the sea, and every condition was favourable save for the moon, which, sinking

behind the ships, may have silhouetted them against its orb, betraying them thus to watchers on the shore.

A rugged and difficult part of the coast had been selected for the landing, so difficult and rugged that I considered the Turks were not at all likely to anticipate such a descent. Indeed, owing to the tows having failed to maintain their exact direction the actual point of disembarkation was rather more than a mile north of that which I had selected, and was more closely overhung by steeper cliffs. Although this accident increased the initial difficulty of driving the enemy off the heights inland, it has since proved itself to have been a blessing in disguise, inasmuch as the actual base of the force of occupation has been much better defiladed from shell fire.

The beach on which the landing was actually effected is a very narrow strip of sand, about 1,000 yards in length, bounded on the north and the south by two small promontories. At its southern extremity a deep ravine, with exceedingly steep, scrub-clad sides, runs inland in a north-easterly direction. Near the northern end of the beach a small but steep gully runs up into the hills at right angles to the shore. Between the ravine and the gully the whole of the beach is backed by the seaward face of the spur which forms the north-western side of the ravine. From the top of the spur the ground falls almost sheer except near the southern limit of the beach, where gentler slopes give access to the mouth of the ravine behind. Farther inland lie in a tangled knot the under-features of Saribair, separated by deep ravines, which take a most confusing diversity of direction. Sharp spurs, covered with dense scrub, and falling away in many places in precipitous sandy cliffs, radiate from the principal mass of the mountain, from which they run north-west, west, south-west, and south to the coast.

The boats approached the land in the silence and the darkness, and they were close to the shore before the enemy stirred. Then about one battalion of Turks was seen running

along the beach to intercept the lines of boats. At this so critical a moment the conduct of all ranks was most praiseworthy. Not a word was spoken—every one remained perfectly orderly and quiet awaiting the enemy's fire, which sure enough opened, causing many casualties. The moment the boats touched land the Australians' turn had come. Like lightning they leapt ashore, and each man as he did so went straight as his bayonet at the enemy. So vigorous was the onslaught that the Turks made no attempt to withstand it and fled from ridge to ridge pursued by the Australian infantry.

This attack was carried out by the 3rd Australian Brigade, under Major (temporary Colonel) Sinclair MacLagan, D.S.O. The 1st and 2nd Brigades followed promptly, and were all disembarked by 2 p.m., by which time 12,000 men and two batteries of Indian Mountain Artillery had been landed. The disembarkation of further artillery was delayed owing to the fact that the enemy's heavy guns opened on the anchorage and forced the transports, which had been subjected to continuous shelling from his field guns, to stand farther out to sea.

The broken ground, the thick scrub, the necessity for sending any formed detachments post haste as they landed to the critical point of the moment, the headlong valour of scattered groups of the men who had pressed far farther into the peninsula than had been intended—all these led to confusion and mixing up of units. Eventually the mixed crowd of fighting men, some advancing from the beach, others falling back before the oncoming Turkish supports, solidified into a semi-circular position with its right about a mile north of Gaba Tepe and its left on the high ground over Fisher-man's Hut. During this period parties of the 9th and 10th Battalions charged and put out of action three of the enemy's Krupp guns. During this period also the disembarkation of the Australian Division was being followed by that of the New Zealand and Australian Division (two brigades only).



From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. the enemy, now reinforced to a strength of 20,000 men, attacked the whole line, making a specially strong effort against the 3rd Brigade and the left of the 2nd Brigade. This counter-attack was, however, handsomely repulsed with the help of the guns of H.M. ships. Between 5 and 6.30 p.m. a third most determined counter-attack was made against the 3rd Brigade, who held their ground with more than equivalent stubbornness. During the night again the Turks made constant attacks, and the 8th Battalion repelled a bayonet charge; but in spite of all the line held firm. The troops had had practically no rest on the night of the 24th-25th; they had been fighting hard all day over most difficult country, and they had been subjected to heavy shrapnel fire in the open. Their casualties had been deplorably heavy. But, despite their losses and in spite of their fatigue, the morning of the 26th found them still in good heart and as full of fight as ever.

It is a consolation to know that the Turks suffered still more seriously. Several times our machine guns got on to them in close formation, and the whole surrounding country is still strewn with their dead of this date.

The reorganization of units and formations was impossible during the 26th and 27th owing to persistent attacks. An advance was impossible until a reorganization could be effected, and it only remained to entrench the position gained and to perfect the arrangements for bringing up ammunition, water, and supplies to the ridges—in itself a most difficult undertaking. Four battalions of the Royal Naval Division were sent up to reinforce the Army Corps on the 28th and 29th April.

On the night of 2nd May a bold effort was made to seize a commanding knoll in front of the centre of the line. The enemy's enfilading machine guns were too scientifically posted, and 800 men were lost without advantage beyond the infliction of a corresponding loss to the enemy. On 4th May an attempt to seize Gaba Tepe was also unsuccessful,

the barbed-wire here being something beyond belief. But a number of minor operations have been carried out, such as the taking of a Turkish observing station; the strengthening of entrenchments; the reorganization of units, and the perfecting of communication with the landing-place. Also a constant strain has been placed upon some of the best troops of the enemy, who, to the number of 24,000, are constantly kept fighting and being killed and wounded freely, as the Turkish sniper is no match for the Kangaroo shooter, even at his own game.

The assistance of the Royal Navy, here as elsewhere, has been invaluable. The whole of the arrangements have been in Admiral Thursby's hands, and I trust I may be permitted to say what a trusty and powerful friend he has proved himself to be to the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

#### THE FRENCH AT KUM KALE.

Concurrently with the British landings a regiment of the French Corps was successfully disembarked at Kum Kale under the guns of the French Fleet, and remained ashore till the morning of the 26th, when they were re-embarked. 500 prisoners were captured by the French on this day.

This operation drew the fire of the Asiatic guns from Morto Bay and V beach on to Kum Kale, and contributed largely to the success of the British landings.

On the evening of the 26th the main disembarkation of the French Corps was begun, V beach being allotted to our Allies for this purpose, and it was arranged that the French should hold the portion of the front between the telegraph wire and the sea.

The following day I ordered a general advance to a line stretching from Hill 236 near Eski Hissarlik Point to the mouth of the stream two miles north of Tekke Burnu. This advance, which was commenced at midday, was completed without opposition, and the troops at once consolidated their new line. The forward movement relieved the growing con-

gestion on the beaches, and by giving us possession of several new wells afforded a temporary solution to the water problem, which had hitherto been causing me much anxiety.

By the evening of the 27th the Allied forces had established themselves on a line some three miles long, which stretched from the mouth of the nullah, 3,200 yards north-east of Tekke Burnu, to Eski Hissarlik Point, the three brigades of the 29th Division less two battalions on the left and in the centre, with four French battalions on the right, and beyond them again the South Wales Borderers on the extreme right.

#### THE GENERAL ADVANCE BEGUN.

Owing to casualties this line was somewhat thinly held. Still, it was so vital to make what headway we could before the enemy recovered himself and received fresh reinforcements that it was decided to push on as quickly as possible. Orders were therefore issued for a general advance to commence at 8 a.m. next day.

The 29th Division were to march on Krithia, with their left brigade leading, the French were directed to extend their left in conformity with the British movements and to retain their right on the coast-line south of the Kereves Dere.

The advance commenced at 8 a.m. on the 28th, and was carried out with commendable vigour, despite the fact that from the moment of landing the troops had been unable to obtain any proper rest.

The 87th Brigade, with which had been incorporated the Drake Battalion, Royal Naval Division, in the place of the King's Own Scottish Borderers and South Wales Borderers, pushed on rapidly, and by 10 a.m. had advanced some two miles. Here the further progress of the Border Regiment was barred by a strong work on the left flank. They halted to concentrate and make dispositions to attack it, and at that moment had to withstand a determined counter-attack by the Turks. Aided by heavy gun fire from H.M.S. *Queen Elizabeth*, they succeeded in beating off the attack, but they

made no further progress that day, and when night fell entrenched themselves on the ground they had gained in the morning.

The Inniskilling Fusiliers, who advanced with their right on the Krithia ravine, reached a point about three-quarters of a mile south-west of Krithia. This was, however, the farthest limit attained, and later on in the day they fell back into line with other corps.

The 88th Brigade on the right of the 87th progressed steadily until about 11.30 a.m., when the stubbornness of the opposition, coupled with a dearth of ammunition, brought their advance to a standstill. The 86th Brigade, under Lieutenant-Colonel Casson, which had been held in reserve, were thereupon ordered to push forward through the 88th Brigade in the direction of Krithia.

The movement commenced at about 1 p.m., but though small reconnoitring parties got to within a few hundred yards of Krithia, the main body of the brigade did not get beyond the line held by the 88th Brigade. Meanwhile, the French had also pushed on in the face of strong opposition along the spurs on the western bank of the Kereves Dere, and had got to within a mile of Krithia with their right thrown back and their left in touch with the 88th Brigade. Here they were unable to make further progress; gradually the strength of the resistance made itself felt, and our Allies were forced during the afternoon to give ground.

#### AMMUNITION RUNNING SHORT.

By 2 p.m. the whole of the troops with the exception of the Drake Battalion had been absorbed into the firing line. The men were exhausted, and the few guns landed at the time were unable to afford them adequate artillery support. The small amount of transport available did not suffice to maintain the supply of munitions, and cartridges were running short despite all efforts to push them up from the landing-places.

Hopes of getting a footing on Achi Babi had now perforce to be abandoned—at least for this occasion. The best that could be expected was that we should be able to maintain what we had won, and when at 3 p.m. the Turks made a determined counter-attack with the bayonet against the centre and right of our line, even this seemed exceedingly doubtful. Actually a partial retirement did take place. The French were also forced back, and at 6 p.m. orders were issued for our troops to entrench themselves as best they could in the positions they then held, with their right flank thrown back so as to maintain connection with our Allies. In this retirement the right flank of the 88th Brigade was temporarily uncovered, and the Worcester Regiment suffered severely.

Had it been possible to push in reinforcements in men, artillery, and munitions during the day, Krithia should have fallen, and much subsequent fighting for its capture would have been avoided.

Two days later this would have been feasible, but I had to reckon with the certainty that the enemy would, in that same time, have received proportionately greater support. I was faced by the usual choice of evils, and although the result was not what I had hoped, I have no reason to believe that hesitation and delay would better have answered my purpose.

For, after all, we had pushed forward quite appreciably on the whole. The line eventually held by our troops on the night of the 28th ran from a point on the coast three miles north-east of Tekke Burnu to a point one mile north of Eski Hissarlik, whence it was continued by the French south-east to the coast.

Much inevitable mixing of units of the 86th and 88th Brigades had occurred during the day's fighting, and there was a dangerous re-entrant in the line at the junction of the 87th and 88th Brigades near the Krithia nullah. The French had lost heavily, especially in officers, and required time to reorganize.

The 29th April was consequently spent in straightening the line, and in consolidating and strengthening the positions gained. There was a certain amount of artillery and musketry fire, but nothing serious.

Similarly, on the 30th, no advance was made, nor was any attack delivered by the enemy. The landing of the bulk of the artillery was completed, and a readjustment of the line took place, the portion held by the French being somewhat increased.

Two more battalions of the Royal Naval Division had been disembarked, and these, together with three battalions of the 88th Brigade withdrawn from the line, were formed into a reserve.

#### THE TURKISH COUNTER-ATTACK.

This reserve was increased on the 1st May by the addition of the 29th Indian Infantry Brigade, which released the three battalions of the 88th Brigade to return to the trenches. The Corps Expéditionnaire d'Orient had disembarked the whole of their infantry and all but two of their batteries by the same evening.

At 10 p.m. the Turks opened a hot shell fire upon our position, and half an hour later, just before the rise of the moon, they delivered a series of desperate attacks. Their formation was in three solid lines, the men in the front rank being deprived of ammunition to make them rely only upon the bayonet. The officers were served out with coloured Bengal lights to fire from their pistols, red indicating to the Turkish guns that they were to lengthen their range; white that our front trenches had been stormed; green that our main position had been carried. The Turkish attack was to crawl on hands and knees until the time came for the final rush to be made. An eloquent hortative was signed by Von Zowenstern and addressed to the Turkish rank and file, who were called upon, by one mighty effort, to fling us all back into the sea.

“ Attack the enemy with the bayonet and utterly destroy him !

“ We shall not retire one step ; for, if we do, our religion, our country, and our nation will perish !

“ Soldiers ! The world is looking at you ! Your only hope of salvation is to bring this battle to a successful issue or gloriously to give up your life in the attempt ! ”

The first momentum of this ponderous onslaught fell upon the right of the 86th Brigade, an unlucky spot, seeing all the officers thereabouts had already been killed or wounded. So when the Turks came right on without firing and charged into the trenches with the bayonet they made an ugly gap in the line. This gap was instantly filled by the 5th Royal Scots (Territorials), who faced to their flank and executed a brilliant bayonet charge against the enemy, and by the Essex Regiment detached for the purpose by the Officer Commanding 88th Brigade. The rest of the British line held its own with comparative ease, and it was not found necessary to employ any portion of the reserve. The storm next broke in fullest violence against the French left, which was held by the Senegalese. Behind them were two British Field Artillery Brigades and a Howitzer Battery. After several charges and counter-charges the Senegalese began to give ground, and a company of the Worcester Regiment and some gunners were sent forward to hold the gap. Later, a second company of the Worcester Regiment was also sent up, and the position was then maintained for the remainder of the night, although about 2 a.m. it was found necessary to dispatch one battalion Royal Naval Division to strengthen the extreme right of the French.

About 5 a.m. a counter-offensive was ordered and the whole line began to advance. By 7.30 a.m. the British left had gained some 500 yards, and the centre had pushed the enemy back and inflicted heavy losses. The right also had gained some ground in conjunction with the French left, but the remainder of the French line was unable to progress.

As the British centre and left were now subjected to heavy cross fire from concealed machine guns, it was found impossible to maintain the ground gained, and therefore, about 11 a.m., the whole line withdrew to its former trenches.

The net result of the operations was the repulse of the Turks and the infliction upon them of very heavy losses. At first we had them fairly on the run, and had it not been for those inventions of the devil—machine guns and barbed wire—which suit the Turkish character and tactics to perfection, we should not have stopped short of the crest of Achi Babi. As it was, all brigades reported great numbers of dead Turks in front of their lines, and 350 prisoners were left in our hands.

On the 2nd, during the day, the enemy remained quiet, burying his dead under a red crescent flag, a work with which we did not interfere. Shortly after 9 p.m., however, they made another attack against the whole Allied line, their chief effort being made against the French front, where the ground favoured their approach. The attack was repulsed with loss.

During the night 3rd-4th the French front was again subjected to a heavy attack, which they were able to repulse without assistance from my general reserve.

The day of the 4th was spent in reorganization, and a portion of the line held by the French, who had lost heavily during the previous night's fighting, was taken over by the 2nd Naval Brigade. The night passed quietly.

During the 5th the Lancashire Fusilier Brigade of the East Lancashire Division was disembarked and placed in reserve behind the British left.

Orders were issued for an advance to be carried out next day, and these and the three days' battle which ensued will be dealt with in my next dispatch.

#### OUR LOSSES.

The losses, exclusive of the French, during the period



covered by this dispatch, were, I regret to say, very severe, numbering :—

177 Officers and 1,990 other ranks killed.

412 Officers and 7,807 other ranks wounded.

13 Officers and 3,580 other ranks missing.

From a technical point of view it is interesting to note that my Administrative Staff had not reached Mudros by the time when the landings were finally arranged. All the highly elaborate work involved by these landings was put through by my General Staff working in collaboration with Comodore Roger Keyes, C.B., M.V.O., and the Naval Transport Officers allotted for the purpose by Vice-Admiral de Robeck. Navy and Army carried out these combined duties with that perfect harmony which was indeed absolutely essential to success.

#### WORK OF THE NAVY.

Throughout the events I have chronicled the Royal Navy has been father and mother to the Army. Not one of us but realizes how much he owes to Vice-Admiral de Robeck ; to the warships, French and British ; to the destroyers, mine sweepers, picket boats, and to all their dauntless crews, who took no thought of themselves, but risked everything to give their soldier comrades a fair run in at the enemy.

Throughout these preparations and operations Monsieur le Général d'Amade has given me the benefit of his wide experiences of war, and has afforded me, always, the most loyal and energetic support. The landing of Kum Kale planned by me as a mere diversion to distract the attention of the enemy was transformed by the Commander of the Corps Expéditionnaire de l'Orient into a brilliant operation, which secured some substantial results. During the fighting which followed the landing of the French Division at Sedd-el-Bahr no troops could have acquitted themselves more creditably under very trying circumstances, and under very heavy losses, than those working under the orders of Monsieur le Général d'Amade.

Lieutenant-General Sir W. R. Birdwood, K.C.S.I., C.B., C.I.E., D.S.O., was in command of the detached landing of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps above Gaba Tepe, as well as during the subsequent fighting. The fact of his having been responsible for the execution of these difficult and hazardous operations—operations which were crowned with a very remarkable success—speaks, I think, for itself.

Major-General A. G. Hunter-Weston, C.B., D.S.O., was tried very highly, not only during the landings, but more especially in the day and night attacks and counter-attacks which ensued. Untiring, resourceful, and ever more cheerful as the outlook (on occasion) grew darker, he possesses, in my opinion, very special qualifications as a Commander of troops in the field.

Major-General W. P. Braithwaite, C.B., is the best Chief of the General Staff it has ever been my fortune to encounter in war. I will not pile epithets upon him. I can say no more than what I have said, and I can certainly say no less.

I have many other names to bring to notice for the period under review, and these will form the subject of a separate report at an early date.

I have the honour to be,

Your Lordship's most obedient Servant,

IAN HAMILTON,

General,

Commanding Mediterranean Expeditionary  
Force.